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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

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Gabriel Bonnot

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ROMANS.

Written originally in FRENCH by

The ABBE DE MABLY.

Bonnot

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LONDON

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE translator of the abbé de MABLY'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROMANS is well apprized, that for an author to attempt to bespeak the favourable opinion of the public, by a specious title page, or preface, is no less idle than imprudent. One thing, however, he can with truth affirm, viz. that the intrinsic merit of abbé MABLY'S book, first determined him to undertake a translation of it; and that he has had the pleasure to find his own opinion supported by that of the best judges.

Not therefore, to trespass upon the reader's time, he would only beg leave to observe, that our author's reasoning appears to be every where animated by good sense, and a more than ordinary knowledge of mankind; that the civil and military policy, as well of the Romans, as of their allies and enemies, is set in a clear light; and lastly, that the characters of their great statesmen and generals are drawn with a masterly pen.

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VI ADVERTISEMENT.

That the *English* translator is not singular in his opinion of this book, is evident from what Mr. *Clement* says of it, in his *Nouvelles Littéraires* of France, for April 1751.

“ The abbé *de Mably*, author of the *Observations on the Greeks*, has just published his *Observations on the Romans*. This is a book may very properly be a companion for *Montesquieu's* *Considerations on the causes of the grandeur and declension of the Romans*. Is not this praising it enough? Or will you after this complain of my prejudices against those, of whom I am not otherwise over-fond. I have read slowly, and with reflexion, a work profoundly meditated, well connected, pregnant with meaning, full of happy conjectures, unravelled intrigues, and matter for solutions. For *M. Mably* is not one, who, like many others, will evade, or retire before, a difficulty. On the contrary, it flatters his disposition. It is his taste. He sticks closely to, and gets the better of every obstacle.”

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OBSERVATIONS

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ROMANS.

PART I.

BOOK I.

Argument. Of the government of the Romans under their kings. How the government of the commonwealth was formed and brought to perfection. What occasioned a change in its principles. Of the causes that must necessarily prove destructive of liberty.

AT the time when Romulus laid the foundation of Rome, Italy exhibited a picture of society in its infancy, being composed of almost as many different states, as it contained towns. Each republic possessed only so much territory, as was barely sufficient to maintain its inhabitants. They lived by the labour of their hands; and poverty, which as yet afforded room for few passions to act, served instead of that multitude of regulations, since introduced by
B policy,

policy, to suppress those vices which are a necessary consequence of politeness and the luxury of great states.

A savage bravery was the only virtue of the runaway slaves and robbers, to whom Rome served as an asylum. They were by no means citizens, but soldiers, united by the common desire of plunder. The more need they had to learn obedience, the more difficult it was to accustom them to the yoke of laws; and Romulus, who feared their stubborn temper, took upon him the character of legislator, only to divest himself of the authority that seemed to belong to him.

After having distributed Rome, according to its different quarters, into tribes and wards, each of which was to have a suffrage in the Campus Martius and Forum, where every thing was determined by a plurality of votes; he left to the Romans all that in effect constitutes the supreme power, as the right of making peace or war, of enacting new laws, of abrogating, or changing old ones, and of electing the magistrates*.

But

* Romulus divided the Romans into three tribes, viz. Tribus Ramnensium, Tatientium, Lucerum; and each tribe into ten curiæ or wards. The Comitia, or general assemblies of the people, were summoned either by the tribes or Curia, Comitia tributa, Comitia Curiata. Each tribe and curia had its place marked out in the Campus Martius and Forum. Tarquin the elder doubled the number of tribes; and Rome continuing still to increase, Servius Tullius made a new distribution of the citizens. He divided the city into four quarters, and its territory into seventeen. The city tribes were at first most powerful; but in the year of Rome 450, the censor Fabius incorporated with them tradesmen, and those who had been slaves, &c. by which means they became contemptible. The tribes were successively increased to the number of thirty-five; but that of the curiæ remained always fixed at thirty.

But this ambitious prince was too fond of command, not to take from his subjects with one hand what he gave with the other; and whilst, obliged to yield to the necessity of the times, he pretended to be only the instrument of their power, he secretly endeavoured to be the spring of their motions.

The creation of a senate, and the privileges granted it, as that of being the prince's council, of laying before the assemblies of the people the matters they were to deliberate upon, of having the execution of their decrees committed to them, or the care of seeing the laws obeyed, far from being an encroachment on the public liberty, would have been its great security, if the people had had the power of filling up vacancies in the senate. But as Romulus himself had chosen the first senators, he likewise reserved to himself the right of naming their successors at pleasure; and it is easy to imagine, how much this new privilege must add to the credit of a prince, who was already the chief judge of his citizens, the general of the army, and supreme in all religious matters. His favour was courted to obtain a place in the senate; so that Romulus, instead of being a simple magistrate, as he should have been, acted the monarch, with a croud of courtiers about him; and the more their number increased, the more his authority prevailed in the assemblies of the people.

Doubtless this prince, who saw with pleasure the pride of the new senators, and their ambition to form a distinct body from the people, was sensible, that if he succeeded in establishing a distinction among the Roman families, and forming a nobility, the peculiar character of whom, at all times, and in all places, is to despise the people, there would thence result a mutual hatred and diversity of interests advantageous to his authority. Accordingly, he affected during his whole

reign, to raise none to the dignity of a senator, but the sons of those who had enjoyed that honour. Numa followed his example, without having the same views; and under his successors, the families descended from the two hundred senators created by Romulus, taking the advantage of a custom which was favourable to them, thought they alone had right to a place in the senate. These pretensions gave umbrage to the people, and upon their complaining, Tarquin the elder, whose view was to erase every mark of equality, that only solid foundation of liberty, created a hundred new senators from among the Plebeians*: by which piece of policy, he, at the same time, satisfied the powerful families of the people, who bore with impatience the pride and distinctions of the Patricians, and confirmed, as yet the precarious state of the nobility.

From that time, a prince politic enough to take the advantage of the passions of the Romans, was no more obliged to act only as the minister of the commonwealth; he ruled the nobles by their ambition to be admitted into the senate, and by degrees he might, according to circumstances, make use of his influence with the senators to extend his authority over the Plebeians, and of the power of these last to intimidate

* Romulus at first created only a hundred senators; afterwards, when the Sabins were incorporated among the Romans, he created a hundred more. They were called, out of respect to their age, Fathers, Patres, whence their posterity assumed the title of Patricians, Patricii; Patres certe ab honore, Patriciique progenies eorum appellati. Tit. Liv. l. I.

The Romans made a distinction between the families of the first senators, and those admitted into the senate, by Tarquin the elder. These last were called *nobiles minorum gentium*.

date and govern the senate. However considerable this progress of the royal prerogative was, it as yet proved no wise hurtful to the public good. The people governed without their being sensible of it, still preserved that dignity of character, without which they could not be good citizens; the nobility, over-awed by the prince and people, were restrained, notwithstanding their pride and power, from making extravagant pretensions; and the prince, obliged to proceed with the utmost caution, and to act only by indirect means, could give no occasion to fear injustice and violence on his part. In a word, all the parts of the state were under a necessity to respect each other; and from this particular interest of each order in the commonwealth, a remedy was naturally found for any transient disturbances arising from the passions.

None but a wicked prince could attempt to alter this constitution; and yet its ruin was effected by a moderate one: this was Servius Tullius, who, according to historians, had designed to abdicate the crown, that his subjects might have no other masters but the laws, of which two annual magistrates were to be the ministers. Whether it was, that without foreseeing the fatal consequences, he was led after the example of his predecessors to enlarge the power of the Patricians; or that tired with the debates and noisy proceedings of the Forum, he was afraid they would degenerate into sedition; or, that he thought it just to trust the administration of the commonwealth to those who by their fortune were most interested in it; he laboured to humble the people, and he succeeded under the pretext of making a regulation apparently for their advantage.

We must call to mind, that in the division which Romulus made of the territory of Rome, each citizen

had only two acres of land; and that, their fortunes being equal, they contributed equally to the charges of the state. Great alterations, however, afterwards happened in the possessions; and notwithstanding that some families enjoyed no patrimony, whilst others had considerably increased theirs, yet the same method of levying the taxes was still observed. Tullius easily perceived the injustice of this proceeding; the people demanded a remedy for the disorder, which appeared to them intolerable; and the nobility, perhaps, informed of the secret designs of the prince, or fearing by their resistance to put the people upon demanding a new division of the lands, agreed to pay taxes in proportion to their riches. Tullius performed the census, that is, took the number of the citizens, each giving a faithful account of his estate. This done, it was an easy matter to levy the taxes in an equitable manner, without making any change in the old division of the Romans into tribes and *curiæ*; but Tullius, who had something else in view, resolved to divide his subjects into six classes on account of their riches: these he afterwards subdivided into an hundred and ninety three centuries, each of which was to pay the same imposition. The nobility, enriched by their usury, and by having gotten possession of most of the conquered lands, made up of themselves alone, a greater number of centuries than the whole people together; and of consequence they became masters of all deliberations in the Campus Martius and Forum, after that Tullius, to make the best of this subtle piece of policy, had introduced the custom of summoning the *comitia* by centuries. This pernicious innovation was established, and the Plebeians, who till then had been in possession of all the authority, as having in each tribe and *curia* a much greater number of votes than the Patricians had, found themselves

themselves deprived even of the right of voting; for it very rarely happened, that, in order to form public decrees, it was afterwards necessary to consult the ninety three centuries which comprehended the Plebeians.

So considerable a change in the Roman constitution threatened their ruin. If the people, tired with appearing to no purpose in the public assemblies, should make any violent attempt to recover their authority, it was to be feared, they would overturn the state, as yet not well established. If they bore patiently this new servitude, they must necessarily fall into that kind of stupidity, which renders the citizen useless to his country. The nobility, on their part, had obtained the empty privilege of forming a body distinct from the Plebeians, and of voting alone in affairs of the government, only to lay them under the necessity of a servile compliance with the will of their kings. Should they resolve to make use of their power, by making an opposition, the simple menace of summoning the comitia by tribes or curiæ, that is to say, of confounding them with the people, would be a sufficient curb to their ambition. The royal authority, then, by daily acquiring new force, was in a fair way to engross the whole; and yet politicians are unable to find out what would have rendered the Romans superior to their neighbours, or at last have given them the empire of the world, had they continued subject to princes, who were not the simple magistrates of a free state. Monarchy is a species of government very fit for a people too much corrupted by avarice, luxury, and a passion for pleasure, to have any love for their country, and whose vices the fear of punishment alone is able to restrain; but it is by no means calculated for a nation that is poor, weak, rude, and

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whose citizens have neither art; industry, nor fortune to employ them at home. Besides, as Rome must have been influenced by the example of its princes, and these being of quite opposite characters, it could have had no fixed maxim, or one continued prospect in view: it would have made war or peace, just as chance should direct. Not to speak of wicked, weak, or voluptuous kings, who would have brought dishonour upon their kingdom and subjects, the Romans had reason to fear even the virtues of some of their kings. A succession of Numas would have shut the temple of Janus, when they ought to have subdued an enemy. One prince would have exerted an heroic courage, in such circumstances as demanded prudence; and another would have been wholly ruled by this last, when he should have been daring and bold. In a word, the Romans, without character, without virtues, and happy or miserable, just as they were well or ill employed, that is to say, having but rarely success, they would at length have undergone the fate of the people whom they subdued.

The contempt shewn by the great in opposition to the hatred of the people, and both their indifference for the public good, those necessary consequences of the changes introduced into the government, gave Tarquin an opportunity of usurping the crown*, and made him entertain hopes of making himself absolute master of his country. He observed the policy of an usurper; he flattered and enriched the soldiers, in order to attach them to his interest; and at the same time that he amused the multitude by exhibiting shows and festivals, and erecting public buildings, he found means to make away with such Patricians as gave him

* The crown of Rome was elective; see Livy and Dionysius Halicarnassensis.

him umbrage, and only spared those, who having neither courage to revenge their country, nor the baseness to be quiet spectators of its slavery, had voluntarily banished themselves from Rome. It cannot be denied, that he was a prince of superior talents; he had almost accustomed the Romans to absolute power; the comitia, or assemblies of the people were forgot; and it is very probable, that he would have confirmed his authority, had his son committed only such crimes against one order of citizens, as flattered the resentment and jealousy of the rest, and not been guilty of an infamous action, that was a common affront to all who bore the name of Romans, and at once inflamed their minds with indignation.

The Tarquins were banished from Rome* by a public decree; the people plundered their palace; the hatred which they bore the king, extended to royalty itself; so that they devoted to the infernal gods all who should endeavour to introduce it again. Such violent proceedings seemed to promise the return of liberty; but the ruin of one tyrant, is almost never the destruction of tyranny itself; and the causes which had established the arbitrary power of Tarquin in Rome, were still an insurmountable obstacle to the establishing the principles of a wise republic. The revolution, it is true, inspired the Patricians and Plebeians with one mind; which was owing to their dangers being at first the same. While the question was only to defend their city, and repel the tyrant, they shewed the same zeal and courage; but as soon as peace took place, their former jealousies sprung up a fresh; and at the same time, that the senate would have kept the government of affairs in their hands, the Plebeians pretended to be free.

Brutus

* This event happened in the 244th year of Rome.

Brutus would have been guilty of a gross oversight, had he, when the eyes of all were fixed on him for establishing the liberty of Rome, endeavoured to introduce among the citizens that equality, which constituted their happiness, before the Romans were distinguished into noble and Plebeian families, and the introduction of centuries. To give the Patricians to understand, that they must renounce their privileges, at a time when they flattered themselves with possessing all that power which the kings had enjoyed; or to make the people suspect that the comitia would no more be assembled by tribes or curiæ, when they were actually in arms for the recovery of their liberty; this would have been to divert the two orders of the commonwealth from the object which demanded their whole attention, to spirit them up against one another, and in short to make a diversion in favour of Tarquin and tyranny. Brutus wisely took the contradictory course of satisfying at once the pretensions of the senate, and of persuading the Plebeians, that for the future they would only obey the laws, which they themselves had made. I am sensible, that by this conduct the laws and inclinations of the Romans must be opposite to each other; and that domestic dissensions must be the consequence of the privileges which Brutus gave the senate, and the hope wherewith he intoxicated the people. Be this as it will, Brutus's conduct is approved, because Tarquin is at the gates of Rome, and assembled formidable forces, whereas the intestine jars of the Romans is only an evil at a distance. Time, favourable circumstances, a thousand unforeseen events, might remedy this defect of government; but nothing less than the union of all the citizens of Rome could triumph over Tarquin.

What

Whatever power the senate and nobility had acquired, the people immediately believed they were free, as being happy. And as long as Tarquin was feared, they were treated with extreme delicacy; but no sooner was the news of his death brought to Rome, than every thing changed its appearance*. The common weakness of mankind, is to judge of their authority, only by the abuse they make of it; and the grandees of Rome would have imagined, they had gained nothing by the banishment of their kings, if they had not governed in as arbitrary a manner as these had done. The consuls assembled the comitia only by centuries; and as here the nobility prevailed, they confirmed whatever was proposed to them by the senate, which, in return for their complaisance, allowed them to commit all manner of violences upon the Plebeians. They deprived them of their estates; they condemned them to slavery, or to suffer ignominious punishments; each Patrician was a new Tarquin. But the people, still full of the promises of Brutus, and that pride with which the favours of Publicola † inspired them, had not purchased

* *Eo nunico erecti patres; erecta plebs; sed patribus nimis luxuriosa ea fuit lætitia: plebi, cui ad eam diem summa ope inservitum erat, injuriæ a primoribus fieri cœpere. Tit. Liv. l. 2.*

Dum metus a Tarquinio, æquo et modesto jure agitatatum. Dein servili imperio patres plebem exercere, de vita atque tergo, regio more consulere; agra pellere & cæteris ex partibus, soli in imperio agere, quibus sævitii, et maxime scœnoris onere oppressa plebs, &c. Sal. in frag.

† The consul Valerius was greatly attached to the interests of the people, which procured him the surname of Publicola. During the war with Tarquin, he held several

chased their liberty by a war, wherein so much heroism had been displayed, to bear with slavish meanness the yoke of a number of tyrants.

Rome seemed in a manner surrounded with dangerous rocks, and it was next to impossible she could escape them all. If the senate and nobles conducted themselves with such prudence and courage as to maintain the authority they had usurped, the people must be subject to a more intolerable servitude than that they had suffered under the Tarquins: for aristocracy is always worse than monarchy. The Plebeians, despised, oppressed, and consequently bad citizens of a country they had no sincere affection for, would have found no advantage in obeying the senate and Patricians, rather than the very enemies of Rome. The Volsci, the Hernici, and the Fidenates would have been dangerous neighbours; for in order to ruin the commonwealth, they would have made use of the internal defect of its government, whereby the greatest part of the citizens would have been detached from its interest. The commonwealth, which, in its as yet weakly and infant state, had need of every citizen, and of multiplying its powers and ability, by the emulation inspired by liberty, would have only armed slaves for its defence; but slaves never yet proved good defenders of their country. Thus the senate, having no resource in dangers, would at last have ruined the state, and seen that power pass into the hands of some of their enemies, which they would not share with the Plebeians. On

several comitia by tribes, and it was in one of these assemblies, that Valerius caused his fasces to lower, to signify that the supreme power resided in the assemblies of the people. He also passed a law, whereby it was enacted, that an appeal should lie from the sentences of the magistrates to the people, which from him was called the Valerian law.

On the other hand, had the people, exasperated by the injuries received from the nobles, and always unbounded in their ambition, oppressed the senate by endeavouring to throw off its yoke, the condition of the Romans would have been nothing more happy. The government would have been changed into downright democracy. Now the works of all political writers, are full of contempt for this kind of government, which always borders upon anarchy, and where the multitude, abusing at pleasure the supreme authority, have sometimes all the fury and caprice of a tyrant, and at other times all the pusillanimity of a weak prince.

There was still greater reason to fear, that the commonwealth of Rome would undergo the same revolutions which caused so much disorder in most of the cities of Greece, after that kingly government was put down. Their government had assumed no certain form, and the nobles and people, masters of the state in their turns, mutually exerted their whole force to ruin each other. If the Romans had been exposed to the same calamities, always slaves to tyrants, and wholly taken up with their domestic heart-burnings, they would, like the Greeks, have sacrificed their country to the particular interests of the factions and parties that tore it to pieces.

Happily, when the people began to complain of the injuries they suffered, the horror, inspired by the violent proceedings of Tarquin, against royalty, still subsisted in its full force, notwithstanding the tyranny of the Patricians. Consequently, in the commonwealth, there was not to be found a Sp. Cassius *, nor any
of

* He was the first of the Romans that aspired at royalty. In the year of Rome 268, being made consul with

of those ambitious spirits, who in aftertimes made an art of creating jealousies, and whose only aim was by means of the disorders of the state, to make a party capable of enabling them to usurp the sovereignty. It is by no means improbable, that in the beginning of the troubles, the people might have been deceived, and insensibly led into such proceedings, as would have carried them to the greatest excess; but they were incapable of such a conduct, so long as they were guided by their own inclinations. The Plebeians, except in the case of jealousy and distrust, were accustomed to respect the senate *. They highly valued the advantage of an illustrious

with Proculus Virginius, he proposed the agrarian law, that is to say, a law ordaining, that after an account was taken of the conquered lands, which the nobles had got possession of, or purchased at a low price, they should be equally divided among all the citizens. Historians tell us, that Cassius's only view in proposing a law, which must necessarily cause such distractions, was in order to make himself master of Rome. The people, penetrating his designs, were so far from seconding, that they abandoned him to the resentment of the nobles, who put him to death, without having the address to charge Cassius's law, with the hatred which they bore its author.

* This respect must be principally attributed to the usage of clients, established by Romulus. When this prince had created a senate, he ordered every Plebeian to choose a patron out of their number, who was obliged to grant him their protection. The clients paid great honour to their protector; they attended him in the streets, and could not refuse him their votes, when he stood candidate for any magistracy. If the patron was poor, his clients taxed themselves, in order to raise a sum to marry his daughters, discharge his debts, or pay his ransom when taken prisoner of war. A patron and his

lustrious birth, at the same time that they hated those who possessed it; and the pomp of magistracy and command, wrought upon their imagination in spite of them. Besides, after they had defended Rome, at the expence of their blood, every private citizen loved it as the work of his own hands, looked upon it as a trophy erected to his valour, and thought himself in some sort accountable for the grandeur, to which, upon the faith of several oracles, it was to rise.

The people therefore, weary with asking relief, contented themselves with going into voluntary banishment, when they ought to have taken vengeance on their tyrants, by an exemplary punishment. The less reason this conduct gave to suspect some design in its authors, the less was the government in danger of being changed into pure democracy; but this was only escaping one danger to fall into another. It was natural for the nobility to make a bad use of the moderation of the Plebeians, in order to establish and thoroughly confirm their power; and they would have easily succeeded, by only pretending to give up a part of it. Happily, all the senators did not view the retreat of the people to the sacred mount* in the same light. Some of them, headed by Appius Claudius, an austere and inflexible man, were so imprudent as to be for punishing, or at least condemning the revolted; others, influenced by Menenius Agrippa, and the family of the Valerii, dreaded the
con-

his client could not give evidence against each other. These rights were sacred among the Romans, and the usage was not wholly abolished, even after the creation of the tribunes of the people.

* It was in the year of Rome 259, or fifteen after the banishment of the Tarquins, that the people retired to the sacred mount.

consequences, and in vain endeavoured to conceal their fear under the appearance of prudence. There lay indeed, a mean course between the indiscreet severity of Appius, and the timorous weakness of the Valerii, and that was to prevent the demands of the people, by shewing them some favour, as the passing a law whereby part of their debts should be discharged, the usury lessened, or some lands belonging to the state distributed among the poorest citizens. But such was the fermentation of passions at that juncture, as to hinder this course from being taken, while the senate neglected their true interests for long debates. The more hot some were in defending their opinions, the more obstinate were the rest in maintaining their ground. While they thus deliberate, provoke each other, and of two opposite opinions form a third, which at once discovers the dread the senate was in, and their extreme backwardness to do the malecontents justice; the Plebeians have time to reflect upon their present situation, and take a view of their forces. They call to mind the vain promises, by which they had so often been deceived; they appoint themselves commanders; they now no longer complain only of what was past, but also provide for the future; their fears must be removed, their condition secured, and the senate is at last compelled to treat with them, and by granting them magistrates, to give them a power which must necessarily inspire them with ambition.

The deputies of the senate thought they had gained a great deal, by taking the advantage of the imprudent eagerness of the people to return into Rome, not to stipulate, except in a vague manner, the privileges and rights of the tribunes that were to be elected. But if the nobles, by this piece of policy, thought they gave up nothing, or at least reserved a pretext

pretext to get loose of their engagements in more favourable circumstances; the people, on their part, thought they had obtained much more than had been yielded them; and each party extending their pretensions by means of the obscurity, or indeterminateness of the articles that had been agreed upon, the commonwealth must still be agitated by the attempts of malecontents, as its disorders were only palliated.

The tribunes had neither any external badge of magistracy, nor even a tribunal: seated in a humble manner at the door of the senate-house, they were not permitted to enter but when called by the consuls; and their whole office consisted in opposing the decrees of that body, when they thought them prejudicial to the interest of the Plebeians. Perhaps, it was still possible to bring the tribuneship into oblivion. Had not the great continued to give way to their desire of ruling after an arbitrary manner, the people would have forgot there was any occasion for a protector.

It was the pride of the nobles that inspired the tribunes with ambition, and made the prerogatives of these new magistrates, which they were to enjoy in quality of defenders of the people, particularly known. Notwithstanding that Martius Coriolanus was one of the most honourable men in the commonwealth, he, at a time when Rome was sore distressed by famine, was the author of that detestable advice, not to relieve the people, but on condition, that they should renounce the privileges they had usurped upon the sacred mount. By this we may form a judgment of the inclinations of the great; but the more they endeavoured to humble and ruin the tribunes, the more these magistrates were sensible, that the defensive part, to which they were reduced, was far from securing the Plebeians: in order to defend them with advantage, it was necessary to have the courage to

act on the offensive. They made an attempt, and in a short time they assumed the privilege of assembling the comitia, and that even by tribes, in affairs wherein the people were directly concerned, as the election of magistrates and actions brought against Plebeians, appeals too, as being authorised by the Valerian law, and the establishment of general regulations.

This success of the tribunes changed the whole form of government; for after the people had again taken possession of that sovereignty, which they had enjoyed before the creation of centuries, Rome began to exhibit the pattern of a perfect commonwealth. I have endeavoured in another work *, to unravel the art whereby Lycurgus at the same time entrusted the people of Sparta with the whole supreme power, and yet freed this democracy from the defects natural to it, and besides enriched it with all those advantages which seem more peculiar to aristocratic and monarchical governments. I ought here to remark, that hazard produced at Rome what the wisest of legislators had done in his country. Lycurgus ordained, that the people should be the arbiters of all the operations in the commonwealth, in order to inspire them with those virtues which the love of liberty and of their country produce in free men; but the different branches of public authority, which the whole body of the people is incapable of wisely discharging, he entrusted to different magistrates; and by this means composed a mixt government, the several parts of which were so attuned together, that they could neither neglect their duty, or abuse their trust.

Sparta had two kings, Rome two consuls; and these kings and consuls, under different names, exercised the same authority. In time of peace, they were not

* The observations on the Greeks. See the first book.

only subject to the laws, the authority of which it was their duty to maintain, but likewise true subjects, the people being their judges. It was only at the head of armies, that the commonwealth entrusted them with absolute power, without which it is impossible for a general to have great success; and by this means, possessed what is most advantageous in a monarchy.

However great the prerogatives of the senate of Lacedæmon were, those of the Roman senate were no less considerable. To it was committed the care of the public treasury; it also represented the whole majesty of the state, had the right of receiving and sending ambassadors, of proposing all matters to be deliberated upon by the people, of seeing them put in execution after they had been approved in the forum; and lastly, of making provisional decrees, which had the force of laws, unless an appeal was made before the people. These two respectable bodies, were the soul of their several countries; they directed and preserved them in the midst of those rocks with which democracy is surrounded. They enabled the people to discuss what regarded their own interests, to keep to certain and fixed principles, and to preserve one uniform design. Polybius observes, that if we consider the authority of the consuls, the senate, and people separately, we shall by turns be induced to think the government of the Romans monarchical, aristocratic, and popular. In effect, it possessed the advantages of them all, as the commonwealth found within itself that quick and speedy action*, which is the characteristic of monarchy; that constancy of design, which is only known in aristocratic governments;

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* Reges non liberi solum impedimentis omnibus, sed domini rerum temporumque, trahunt consiliis cuncta, non sequuntur. Tit. Liv. l. 9.

and that zeal, fire and enthusiasm, which democracy alone is capable of producing.

If at Sparta every thing concurred to establish still more and more the government I have been praising, it was far otherwise at Rome; the very manner in which it had been formed, seemed to foretel its ruin. So important a revolution as the re-establishment of the comitia by tribes could not be brought about without exciting great commotions in the forum. The senate made an extreme opposition to the designs of the tribunes, and these magistrates being unable to succeed any other way but by exceeding all bounds, pushed their attempt so far as to violate the majesty of the consuls*. The injuries done and suffered by both parties on this occasion, were of too atrocious a nature not to be followed by new outrages. It was natural for the people, transported by their success and passion, to abuse their victory, by suffering no other authority in the commonwealth but their own. They would certainly have ruined the government, by abolishing the senate, if another object had not made a diversion in favour of this last body, and secured their privileges with those of the consuls.

As the re-establishment of the comitia by tribes was less prejudicial to the senators than the simple Patricians, their conduct must of consequence be different. To the former was left the pomp and ornaments of the

* Concitati homines, veluti ad prælium se expeditunt: apparebatque omne discrimen addesse, nihil cuiquam sanctum, non publici fore, non privati juris. Huic tantæ tempestati quum se consules obtulissent, facile experti sunt parum tutam majestatem sine viribus esse. Violatis lictoribus, fascibus fractis, e foro in curiam compelluntur, incerti quatenus Volero exerceret victoriam, Tit. Liv. l. 2.

the empire with a considerable part of the administration of affairs; whereas the latter were deprived of all the authority they had enjoyed in the assemblies of the Campus Martius and Forum. Besides, the senate being composed of the most grave men in the commonwealth, acted with moderation, as having antient usages and respected laws to plead in favour of their prerogatives. But the nobility, who owed their origin to corruption, and whose whole grandeur, if I may use the expression, had been acquired by stealth, were, in order to defend their pretended rights, obliged to make use of force, instead of a just title. Hence it was, that they acted with such violence, that the senate, notwithstanding their opposition to the demands of the people, appeared only to perform the office of mediators between the Patricians and tribunes.

This difference of behaviour among the great, determined that of the people. They ceased to attack the senate, in order to be at full liberty to indulge their passion for humbling the nobility. The Patricians had assumed several peculiar prerogatives; they alone could be invested with the dignity of senator, of curule magistracies, and the office of pontiffs. The tribunes exerted themselves successively to overthrow all these privileges; and notwithstanding the disputes which constantly prevailed in the forum, and that with such violence, that most historians were of opinion, the state was just ready to be embroiled in a civil war, the principles of government daily acquired more solidity. The losses sustained by the nobility tended in some sort to confirm the rights of the consuls and senate; for the more the people flattered themselves with the hopes of sharing the magistracies, and other places with the Patricians, the more careful they must be not to bring them into contempt.

If the Romans forbore to take up arms against each other, at a time when the Plebeians had no other way to shake off the yoke imposed on them, or when the power of the tribunes reached no farther than simply to oppose the decrees of the senate, and thereby suspend the executive part of the government, and throw the state into a sort of anarchy; how was it possible they should come to extremities, when none of these inconveniencies were to be feared? The people could not begin a civil war, as having a tribunal where they might summon their enemies, and take vengeance in a judicial way, for the injuries they had received; and the manner in which they attacked the Patricians hindered these last from committing the first hostilities.

Though the Plebeians had power sufficient to oppress the nobility in a moment, it was impossible, notwithstanding the spite they bore them, they should so much as entertain a thought of it. The mind opens to ambition only by degrees; it is one advantage which invites to a second; for what monstrous contradiction would we not find between an extravagant decree, by which the tribunes should demand the whole privileges of the Patricians to be abolished, and the extreme moderation observed by the people in their retreat to the sacred mount? This very people, on the contrary, after having gained an advantage, often appeared ashamed of their victory. Sometimes they repaired the injury they had done the nobles, by chusing their tribunes out of this last body. It is well known, that they raised none but Patricians to the office of military tribune*, though they

* In the consulship of M. Genutius and C. Curtius, and year of Rome 309, the people demanded a law, autho-

they had shewn the greatest eagerness to share the fasces with them. The tribunes, that they might not drive the nobles to despair, were obliged to conceal part of their ambition. The nobles, therefore, being never in danger of losing their privileges all at once, lay under no necessity of taking the desperate course of involving the state in destructive broils. Each event prepared way for that which followed; thus the law, authorising the Plebeians to stand candidates for the military tribuneship, was an omen they would one day be consuls, and previously tended to comfort the nobility for that revolution.

In reading the Roman history, it is not sufficiently attended to, that the Romans, after that the tribunes had re-established the custom of assembling the comitia by tribes, had their hands bound down by the very form of their government. Each citizen had a voice in the deliberations of the forum. The liberty of complaining, of murmuring, of proposing and explaining their reasons, was a kind of salutary transpiration to the whole body of the commonwealth, and hindered noxious humours from gathering to a head. People judge of the situation of the Romans, by that of the nations they are conversant with at present. We do not see that commotions which are useful to a poor and uncorrupted people, will necessarily prove destructive to a nation, where avarice and luxury have stifled all love of the public good, and rendered the citizens only sensible of their personal interest. But at present,

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authorising them to stand candidates for the consulship equally with the nobles. It was agreed by accommodation, that the Plebeians might enjoy all the honours of that magistracy, under the name of military tribunes, and not that of consuls.

sent, when whole provinces compose only one community ; when a small number of the citizens engross the whole riches of the state, while the rest, depressed by their misery or employment, subsist only by the vices of the rich, are subject only because oppressed, and possess nothing but their industry, which binds them to no party or form of government ; what would be the consequence, if the same commotions prevailed in them as did in the commonwealth of Rome, supposing they had the same relations, connections, and ties, which united the Romans, and opened a thousand ways for a reconciliation, while the state, so to speak, was confined within the walls of one city ? The divisions of the Romans would degenerate into a civil war in most states of Europe, both because they are not free, and because their manners being already corrupted, they would by that means be rendered still worse. The Romans, on the contrary, were uncorrupted, and their dissensions, occasioned by their attempt to ruin the prerogatives of birth, which can never be allowed but at the expence of honour, merit, and ability, only gave them a greater relish for virtue *.

Historians tell us, that when the people were ambitious of sharing the magistracies with the nobles, they endeavoured to render themselves worthy of them ; and the Patricians, on their part, strove to keep the Plebeians at a distance, by surpassing them as much by the lustre of their virtues as by that of birth. The more offices there were for which the Plebeians might stand

* Machiavel, in his political dissertations on Tit. Livy, has proved, that liberty cannot subsist long in a republic where there are nobles. The nobility think themselves designed for governing. They are, says he, a vermin which insensibly corrode and sap the foundations of liberty.

stand candidates along with the nobles, the greater was the incentive to merit; and from this general emulation, sprung that multitude of great men, to whom the grandeur of the commonwealth was owing. The nice and mutual attention which these two orders of citizens had upon each others conduct, wound up all the springs of the government. The great not daring now to usurp the conquered lands, accustomed themselves to a mediocrity of fortune, which for a long time kept out luxury. They acquired glory and respect independent of riches; poverty was even honourable; the citizens, wholly taken up with public affairs, looked with more indifference upon their domestic interests, and insensibly contracted the habit of preferring the public good.

Revenge, hatred, pride, jealousy, and other passions, whence, one would think, nothing but fatal consequences could be expected, by interfering with each other, increased the number of the laws, and strengthened their authority. Good laws would have only made the Romans wise and free; whereas the commotions occasioned by the enacting these laws, raised their character to that of heroes. Laws wisely connected together, would have been sufficient to keep the magistrates within the bounds of their duty and of good sense; but something farther was necessary to make the consuls devote themselves for the preservation of their country, or to sacrifice the life of their sons in order to keep up discipline. New magistracies were created, only to serve as a check upon the nobility, some of whose privileges were to be taken from them. These proved of infinite advantage to the whole body of the commonwealth, as serving to confirm its liberty, by establishing a greater equality among the magistrates,

gistrates, and, making them more assiduous in the discharge of their offices.

I ought not to pass over in a slight manner the establishment of censors, who, though only designed to take the census, or number of the citizens in the absence of the consuls, soon assumed to themselves the reformation of manners. Both the orders of the commonwealth were equally subject to their power. They opened a way into the senate, to the citizen who deserved that distinction; and expelled from it the senator, that had rendered himself unworthy of his place there. They took from the knights the badges of their dignity, and degraded a simple Plebeian to a less honourable tribe, than that in which he was enrolled. The vigilance of these magistrates was an useful check upon the natural inconstancy of mankind, and that negligent supineness, which is so much the more dangerous to a state, as, without openly violating the laws, it first lessens their authority, then insensibly suffers them to fall into oblivion, and at last entirely abrogates them, though no one is able to assign the date of their fall. The censors punished only those faults, which tended to licentiousness; and formed, as it were, a strong bulwark between the Romans and corruption. Thus it was the commonwealth acquired a habit of that austerity of manners, which contributed more to their success in war, than even to gain the praises of posterity.

I beg leave to make a few reflections on an object no less interesting than the pretended danger the Romans were in during their dissensions. As they had several occasions equally pressing, it was necessary to establish certain laws, and a fixed manner of proceeding;

ceeding; for till the time of the Decemvirs *, the judges had followed no other rules of giving judgment, than those prescribed by natural equity; it was also necessary to provide for a multitude of citizens without patrimonies; sometimes again, they were wholly taken up with some general regulation, or an impeachment brought against a magistrate, who had incurred the displeasure of the tribunes; one affair served to divert them from the rest, and the people sometimes seemed to forget, how much it was their interest to humble the Patricians. Besides, it was no easy matter for the tribunes to conduct themselves with such prudence, as to intimidate the nobles, or to make them take some violent course; if, in order to increase their power, they associated new colleagues, they, on the contrary, only weakened themselves, and gave the nobles a more sure and easy way to obstruct their designs by some of their own number †. Is the odious law to be abrogated, which prohibits the people to contract alliances with Patrician families ‡? It happens before they have de-
prived

* It was in the year of Rome 300, that is to say, 56 years after the banishment of the Tarquins, that the Decemvirs published the laws of the twelve tables. This was the first code which the Romans had.

† The opposition of one tribune to the demand of his colleague, put a stop to his proceedings; and the nobility had sometimes the address to gain some of them to their interest.

‡ The Decemvirs enacted this law in their last table, which would have greatly facilitated the establishment of their tyranny, by cutting off all means of union between the two orders of the state. Dionysius Halicarnassus judiciously observes, that, in order to secure their public tranquillity, it was necessary to abolish this tyrannical

prived their enemies of their prerogatives, by which means they are reduced to the disagreeable situation of opposing them for the future with less success. For it must be acknowledged that in a Republic, where every thing for a long time had concurred to gain the nobles respect, the advantage of making alliances with them, must necessarily add to the number of their creatures, and draw over the most powerful Plebeians from the side of the people: hence it is observed, that from that time, the disputes of the Romans began to be less violent. It would be tedious to take notice of all the

nical law, so injurious to the people. But this was what the tribunes had little at heart; it was their interest to keep the people always equally incensed against the Patricians. It was therefore imprudent in them to abrogate the law of the Decemvirs, before they had deprived the nobility of all their privileges. I observe by the by, that the nobles were not immediately sensible of this blunder in the protectors of the people. When they ought to have studiously concealed their joy, and only pretended to defend their rights out of policy, and that no farther than was necessary to make the people believe they granted them a favour, they indulged their pride. If we may credit what Livy makes the tribune Canuleius say, the Patricians thought it strange, that nature had given the same organs to the populace as to themselves; *quod spiratis, quod vocem mittitis, quod formas hominum habetis, indignantur.* To this foolish vanity of the nobility, it was owing, that a regulation in itself so advantageous to them, became very fatal in its consequences; for the people, in order to be revenged for the contempt shewn them by the nobles, aspired to the consulship itself, by passing a law, authorising them to enjoy that office, under the name of the military tribuneship.

the oversights which the tribunes were guilty of, and which hindered the success of their undertaking*.

After all that has been said, it may be asked, whether the commotions of the Forum were too violent on the one hand, or maintained with too great wilfulness on the other? Some unforeseen event always prevented their bad consequences. The neighbours of Rome thinking this a circumstance favourable to their ambition or vengeance, made an incursion upon their territories; but here every Roman was interested to defend his patrimony, his fields, and harvest. The people no longer give ear to the tribunes, and at their return from the wars, resume with less heat the affair they had postponed. On the most urgent occasions, the senate had another resource, which was to create a Dictator, who was rather an absolute king than magistrate, as being obliged to consult neither the senate, people, or magistrates, whose offices immediately ceased. He made use of his absolute authority to suspend the disorders of the Forum, and divert the attention of the people to something else.

In a word, need we any other proof, that the Roman commonwealth was in no danger of being destroyed by a civil war, than the slowness of the tribunes

* One Volscius accused Ceso Quintius, of having assassinated his brother. As this calumny was the contrivance of the tribunes, it concerned them much to prevent its being laid open; so that it became a sort of shield to the Patricians. When the tribunes proposed any new law, the consuls, says Livy, demanded judgment to be passed upon Volscius, so that each side kept the other in awe; *eodem modo consules legem, tribuni judicium de Volschio impediabant*, l. 3. The Patricians had even the imprudence to cause Volscius to be punished in the dictatorship of Quintius Cincinnatus.

bunes progress? There was near a century and an half, between the first creation of this office, and the tribuneship of Licinius, Stolo, and Sextius, when the Plebeians were allowed to share the consulship, and all other offices with the nobility; besides, the conclusion of this great work must be forwarded by fortune.

Livy relates, that M. Fabius Ambustus, head of the Fabian family, had married one of his daughters to a Patrician called Ser. Sulpicius, and the other to C. Licinius Stolo, a simple Plebeian. One day the wife of this last happened to be with her sister, when Sulpicius, then military tribune, returned from the senate; and the lictors beating the door with their fasces to signify his return, young Fabia was startled at the noise, as not being accustomed to it, upon which her sister gave her to understand, that there was no reason to be afraid, but did it with such shyness, as might make her sensible of the distance there was between them two. Stolo's wife, being touched to the quick, had neither the spirit to despise the vanity of her sister, nor to conceal her resentment, though she was ashamed to discover the motives of it.

Her father and husband at length, by much entreaty, got the secret from her; she confessed, that it gave her the utmost concern to think, that though she was come of the same blood with the wife of Sulpicius, yet it was unlawful for her husband to bear the chief offices in the commonwealth. Fabius had the weakness to enter into all the views of his son-in-law, whom his love for Fabia had inspired with ambition. Stolo associated L. Sextius, whose courage and eloquence put him in a condition of attempting the greatest enterprizes. They both together solicited the tribuneship, and were no sooner at the head of the people, than they proposed and passed a law, ordaining that the commonwealth should

should for the future be governed only by consuls, and that one of the two should necessarily be chosen out of the body of the people.

From that time, the senate was open without any distinction to Plebeians and Patricians. Censors, prætors, pontiffs, in a word, every office might be conferred upon them; they even enjoyed the honours of the dictatorship *. As birth had no longer any peculiar privileges, the distinction established between the nobles and people disappeared, and made way for the most compleat equality. Their rights were so blended, as to be inseparable; different interests were now impossible, and it is from this period, that the dissensions of the Forum ceased, and that Rome enjoyed a happy calm.

The tribunes had never made any attack upon the dignity of the senate and consuls, except in an indirect manner, and so far as it was unavoidable, in order the more effectually to humble the nobles; but now so far from continuing to bring them into discredit, the vanity of Stolo's successors, and of the most considerable Plebeians, was engaged to promote their interest. If there still remained any subject of dispute in the commonwealth, it could only be in relation to the agrarian laws. But these laws, first proposed by the consul Sp. Cassius, and which, till the tribuneship of

* The first dictator was created in the year of Rome 255, four years before the retreat of the people to the sacred mount. Sextius was the first Plebeian who obtained the consulship, which was in the year of Rome 388. The first Plebeian dictator was C. Martius Rutilus, who being advanced to that honour, in the year 397, named C. Plantius, another Plebeian, for the master of the horse. The same Rutilus was censor, and L. Philo was the first Plebeian raised to the office of prætor.

of Licinius Stolo, had met with no success, were disregarded, either because people were accustomed to see them rejected, or because it was impossible to put them in execution. In effect, it was not possible to establish a just distinction between the lawful patrimony of each particular person, and what he had acquired by unwarrantable means, in so rude times as were the first ages of the Roman commonwealth, when the titles of property, and the public records of contracts were unknown. Besides, Licinius had put an end to that affair, by enacting two laws, the one of which ordained, that creditors should deduct from their principal what sums they had received as interest; and the other, made it unlawful for any citizen to possess more than five hundred acres of land.

The Romans, by the time that Licinius's tribuneship expired, had conquered a considerable part of Italy; and however powerful the nations were, with whom they might wage war for the future, they must of necessity be subdued. The wisdom of their government, gave the Romans an infinite superiority over their enemies; and till the time of the second Punic war, Rome had only experienced a few disasters, against which she found within herself a no less sure than speedy remedy. Annibal himself, after several victories, was at last obliged to abandon his design of burning the capitol, in order to go and defend the walls of Carthage. Conquered at Zama, he to no purpose carried his hatred of the Romans into Asia. Philip having lost the battle of Cynocephale had recourse to their clemency; and when Perseus attempted to raise Macedonia from the low state, to which it had fallen, he was overcome, and together with his children, adorned the triumph of Paulus Æmilius. Antiochus, too happy in having obtained peace, reigned only

only on the other side of mount Taurus. Popilius caused his son to tremble, though surrounded by a victorious army, treating him like one conquered. Carthage was now nothing but a heap of ruins. Rome, at last, had acquired the sovereignty of almost the whole world, but was itself tottering under its great fortune; and while it filled the nations with terror, a philosopher, who had examined the foundations of its grandeur, would have been no less afraid of the fate that awaited the Romans; since he must see, that their prosperity had destroyed the causes which produced it.

If the commonwealth of Lacedemon, notwithstanding the austere and wise laws of Lycurgus, which had been religiously obeyed for seven hundred years, could not subdue Greece, and at the same time resist the temptation of imposing tributes, and enriching themselves with the spoil of their enemies; how was it possible for the Romans, among whom the love of poverty had never been a sincere passion, as it was at Sparta, not to make the same bad use of their victories? Sparta entertained the vain hopes of becoming rich, of having treasure sufficient for undertaking considerable enterprizes against their enemies, and that her citizens should notwithstanding preserve their ancient contempt of riches; she was deceived, and the severe law enacted upon that occasion, prohibiting particular persons upon pain of death, to possess any piece of gold or silver, was soon violated with impunity. The Romans, then, who were less attentive to provide against the charms of avarice, must necessarily aggrandize their private fortune, in proportion as their commonwealth increased its empire and riches.

So long as the Romans vanquished only people as poor as themselves, their government merited the

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greatest praise ; but after they had carried their arms into Africa and Asia, its principles were subverted, the vices of these rich provinces being transported to Rome with their spoils. New passions sprung up in the breasts of the Romans ; their wants increased and multiplied ; luxury new modelled their manners ; their taste became more refined ; superfluities were esteemed necessary ; and the antient austerity of manners now passed for savage rusticity.

After this contagion had infected the people, after they had learned of the great a passion for voluptuousness, and to look upon poverty as the greatest disgrace, they were ready to commit all manner of crimes, in order to acquire that riches, which their avarice made them esteem the sovereign good. The authority they enjoyed, served only to minister to their passions. All places of power soon passed into the hands of the rich, who by downright purchasing of offices and votes in the assemblies of the people, became the arbiters of the state ; so that under the deceitful appearance of the antient government, the Romans were in reality subject to a true aristocracy.

On the one hand, a certain number of persons had got possession of the riches of the conquered nations, and the contributions of the provinces ; on the other, the Licinian law, which allowed every citizen to possess only five hundred acres of land, had not been repealed by a contrary one. To look at the law, nothing was to be seen but the wisest regulations against luxury ; but to look abroad in the world, one might see private citizens richer than kings, silencing the laws by their pomp and ostentation.

The commonwealth had formerly been divided into two parties, the Patricians and Plebeians ; but then into citizens who were rich, and those who were poor.

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The hope Brutus had given the people of being free, was the pretence they made use of in order to recover their former dignity, and compel the nobles to give up their prerogatives. The Licinian law too was found strongly in favour of the poor, after that, weary with purchasing the favours of the great by their complaisance, they had multiplied their wants, and were become insolent enough to rest no longer contented with being despoiled of their own. Hence arose a new source of dissensions in the Roman state; the laws and manners are a second time at variance; so that the Romans must now be subject to the same disturbances from the distribution of riches, as they had been formerly from that of power and authority. But as their government no longer served as a curb upon their passions, one must be very ignorant of the human heart, and the mutual sympathy that subsists among vices, to imagine, that these new troubles would not be equally fatal to the Romans, whose manners were now corrupted, as the first had been advantageous to them, when virtuous.

However, this was not the only quarter, from whence the commonwealth was threatened with ruin. The vast extent of its dominions, exposed it to still greater dangers; by this means it had lost its authority over those who bore offices in the provinces; and though the Romans should not have been ruined by their corruption of manners, they must have been oppressed by their proconsuls.

How great soever, says Polybius, the power of a consul at the head of his army might be, it was impossible for him to make a bad use of it, while the empire of the Romans was confined within Italy; the senate, under whose observation and inspection he was, needed only to keep back the succours they sent the

army, to procure the fall of a general, whose fidelity they suspected. The public safety, in this respect, consisted in this, that Italy did not enable the consuls to procure subsistence for themselves, nor to conceal their designs for any considerable time. Here then, we see the cause which kept their authority in an equilibrium with that of the commonwealth, or rather obliged them never to exceed the bounds of subjection. But this counterpoise of consular power lost its efficacy, after the armies passed the seas. The consuls, who in Italy bore only that office, in the provinces were consuls, prætors, censors, ediles, the senate and the people. They treated with the nations bordering upon their province, disposed of their conquests, distributed crowns at their pleasure, and regulated the proportion of tributes and contributions. They commanded in rich provinces, which enabled them to provide whatever was necessary for their army; thus Cæsar and Crassus made war with the forces of their own governments alone, and that without the consent of the commonwealth, the assistance of which was become useless to them.

The unlimited power assumed by the consuls no ways alarmed the Romans, as being favourable to the progress of their arms, and the aggrandisement of their empire; for ambition had so transported them, that they judged only of their interests, by the success of their legions. This blind propensity of the commonwealth went so far, that instead of establishing some new proportion, which might preserve their superiority over the consuls, they were only sensible of the inconveniences attending the annual duration of these magistrates. "Is it not ridiculous, would they say at Rome, that we should be such slaves of a wretched custom, as to act in the same manner to-day, as
" when

“ when we had to do with the Sabines, the Volsci,
 “ or Fidenates? Our fathers had reason to change
 “ their generals annually, since their most difficult wars
 “ were ended in only one campaign; whereas in fact,
 “ our enemies cannot be conquered, but by a long
 “ train of success. Why then do we recal at the ex-
 “ piration of his office, a consul who has had only
 “ time to prepare matters for an expedition, to in-
 “ form himself of the country where he is to make
 “ war, to discover wherein consists the strength and
 “ weakness of the opposite army, and who is just go-
 “ ing to make use of this knowledge? Our present
 “ practice is to give him a successor, whose views are
 “ frequently opposite to his; and who, after having,
 “ in like manner, spent a part of his year in prepar-
 “ ing matters, will be recalled before he has done
 “ any thing of consequence.” These reasons affected
 the tribunes, and made them oppose the recalling of
 Flaminius from Greece. “ Sulpicius, said they, has
 “ spent almost the whole time of his consulship in
 “ finding out the enemy; Villius, his successor, has
 “ not had time to come to blows with them; when
 “ just ready to give them battle, he was obliged to
 “ yield his command to a new consul, who would
 “ have thought himself dishonoured, if he only exe-
 “ cuted what his predecessor had in view. In a word,
 “ added they, Macedonia, though ready to pass under
 “ the yoke, is now in a fair way of recovering its
 “ antient splendour, and possibly may prove invincible
 “ through our caprice; so that all the past success of
 “ Flaminius is lost as to us, if he is not continued in
 “ his office.” The institution of proconsuls was esta-
 blished; and magistrates, who already possessed a power
 formidable to the state, were invested with it so long,
 that at last, it became easy for them to retain it as

long as they pleased, to brave the laws, and oppress their fellow citizens.

Notwithstanding so many imperfections in the Roman commonwealth, that conspired to hasten its downfall, it not only enjoyed a state of tranquillity, but was for some time in a flourishing condition. This we are to attribute to several reasons. The probity, which was the effect of their antient government, and which was not soon extinguished by the decay of the laws, was one. The habit of good manners occasioned the introduction of hypocrisy, that bore a resemblance of them, when the reality was gone. Those, who in private were really vicious, in public put on the mask of virtue. Before the populace conceived the design of dispossessing the rich, it was necessary they should first have shaken off that kind of astonishment and admiration with which riches inspired them. Ambition could not be the ruling passion of the rich.

There is a certain order among the passions; and the monstrous avarice of the great, which made them plunder indifferently the commonwealth, their enemies, and allies, fitted them rather for pleasure than tyranny. A considerable time was necessary, before luxury could impoverish these voluptuaries who possessed the whole riches of the world. When this fatal moment was come, violent measures were to be taken, in order to supply them with the means of still pursuing their pleasures. At this juncture, ambition must make its appearance among a number of citizens, who would find a surer way to honours and riches, in the confusion and disorders of the state, than in a sincere attachment to its interest. In order to commence tyrants in Rome, they must first usurp the sovereignty of it; but there was no hopes of doing this, till Rome was filled with a contemptible populace, driven

driven from their estates, and ashamed of their poverty; and till the armies, composed of despicable citizens, should take as much pleasure in plundering Rome as Carthage, or Numantia.

What hindered the Romans from preventing these calamities, with which the commonwealth was threatened, when it might have been done, was their prosperity. This was the true cause, that ruined the principles of their government; and it rarely happens, that a nation is so wise as to distrust prosperity, by looking upon it, as the first step to their fall. When the first Scipio had subdued Africa, the Romans ought to have suspected their being threatened with some revolution, and that their government, for these very reasons, which had raised them to the highest pitch of fortune, would be unable to preserve and support it. But did the defeat of Annibal and conquest of Carthage, inspire the Romans with any other sentiment, but that of joy? While the whole commonwealth was intoxicated by its success, and thought itself almost in possession of the universal monarchy promised by the gods, would they have given ear to the remonstrances of a citizen, who, looking into futurity beyond the present prosperity, should have foretold, that Rome was ready to be undone?

Among so many causes of their ruin, the Romans were only sensible of the corruption of manners; and to this torrent, which daily gathered new force, the only bulwark opposed by some persons of honour and integrity, was the impotent, I had almost said ridiculous example of their virtue, and some antient laws, which the Romans already looked upon only as evidences of the rudeness of their forefathers. What did it avail Cato the censor, to exclaim continually; 'our ancestors! oh our ancestors! oh times! oh man-

'ners!' And to cry out against luxury, and in favour of the Oppian law? It was excusable in a poet to give way to his chagrin, by advising the Romans, to throw their treasure into the sea, or adorn the capitol with it*; but a censor, and politician, could he imagine, that the charms of riches and pleasures, were less persuasive than his eloquence? The question was not wholly to hinder a change of manners and revolution in the government, this was unavoidable; but only to render the way to it more easy.

After the second Punic war, there appeared a very simple method of preserving the antient form of government in the commonwealth, or at least, of preventing the changes which could not be avoided, from producing those terrible disorders that introduced the most oppressive tyranny in the place of liberty. Instead of commissioners, whom the Romans sometimes sent into their new conquests, to determine their fate, and make regulations that were soon forgot after their departure; they ought to have made it a constant rule to send into those provinces where they had armies, a certain number

* Vel nos in capitolium,
Quo clamor vocat & turba faventium;
Vel nos in mare proximum
Gemmas & lapides, aurum & inutile,
Summi materiam mali,
Mittamus, &c.

Oh! let us consecrate to Jove
(Rome shall with shouts the pious deed approve)
Our gems, our gold, pernicious store!
Or plunge into the deep the baleful ore,
From whose destructive source, the woes
Of impious war, with direful horrors rose.

Francis's Hor. Od. 24. l. 3.

ber of senators, who should there represent the majesty of the senate. These deputies, having the same authority in their respective departments, as the senate of Rome had in Italy, would have allowed the proconsuls only so much power, as the first consuls had who subdued the nations in the neighbourhood of Rome. These senators would have had the whole management of the civil government in the conquered provinces; they would have treated with allies and strangers, and received the taxes, contributions and tributes. They would have been charged with the payment of the soldiers, and the care of providing them with arms and subsistence; so that the proconsuls must of consequence have been subject to them.

It was no less easy to retain this provincial senate in their duty, and keep them dependent on that of Rome. The family of these senators would have been an hostage for their fidelity. The three eldest deputies might have been recalled every year, three new ones being substituted in their place; and supposing this provincial senate composed, of twelve senators, each of them would have continued in office only four years, and that always with some new colleagues. This would effectually have prevented them from undertaking any thing against the commonwealth, to which they must have continued subject, notwithstanding their superiority over the generals of the army.

It is no difficult matter to conceive how advantageous, in a thousand other respects, this regulation would have been, as being so proper to restrain the ambition of the proconsuls, without diminishing in the least the power which a general of an army ought to have. The provinces would not have been exposed to the excessive extortion of their proconsuls and

vernors. Riches too being conveyed to Rome by little and little, would not have flowed into it with such a rapid and sudden tide, as to leave no time either to foresee the danger, to reflect upon the situation in which they were, or to enact laws against it. The change of manners would have been brought about insensibly; the new customs rendered necessary by the Roman greatness, would have been introduced without giving offence, and the laws been forgot, and not boldly violated. By this means, they would have not only prevented the civil wars, kindled by the independence of the generals; but likewise had any ambitious tribunes attempted to raise disturbances in the state, and under the pretence of causing the ancient laws to be revived, endeavoured to make themselves masters of the government, and establish their own tyranny, the senate could have checked him in his first outset, as being really possessed of all public authority, and having the armies at their disposal.

BOOK II.

Argument. *The affair of the Gracchi, of Marius, and of Sylla. The first triumvirate. The civil war of Caesar. Of the situation and conduct of the commonwealth after his death. The second triumvirate. Augustus engrosses the whole public authority.*

THE troubles, mentioned in the former book, threatened to break out at once, by some attempt of the armies upon the public liberty; and probably, the only reason which hindered it, was, that such

such a conduct appeared too manifestly criminal, too opposite to the Roman way of thinking, and in a word, too new. There is a kind of horror which always precedes unjust, unusual, and important actions, and which put the ambitious Cæsar himself to a stand on the banks of the Rubicon, though he was emboldened by the example of a civil war, and the wishes of a part of the commonwealth. This, without doubt, retained a great many generals in their duty, from the time of the first Scipio to that of Sylla.

On the contrary, there was a tradition among the Romans, advantageous to the antient disputes between the nobles and people: besides, it was not only convenient to serve as an excuse for a seditious tribune, but made him be regarded as the avenger of justice and the laws. Hence ambition might shew itself with less danger, and more decency, by exciting popular commotions; so that it was natural, the disorders which proved the ruin of the Roman commonwealth, the concatenation whereof I am going to unravel, should take their rise from the tribunes.

Some historians tell us, that Cornelia reproached her son Tiberius Gracchus, for his indifference in regard to the public welfare, at a time when his country stood in need of a reformer; and that by recovering from oblivion those regulations, to which the Roman grandeur was owing, he might render himself no less famous than the greatest generals. Others pretend, that, in travelling through Italy, he was touched with the deplorable condition in which he saw the country. It was nothing but a desert, or cultivated only by slaves. Tiberius, being thus an eye-witness of the fatal effects of luxury, thought himself obliged, say they, to delay not one moment longer to re-establish the authority of the laws. It is more probable

to

to think, that he was inspired by ambition alone; and that he only put on the mask of reformer, in order to gain the favour of the populace, and by their means to make himself master of a state, the government of which was incapable of being reformed, and whose liberty began to be a burden to it.

It was with the rash design of forcibly seizing the estates of the rich, and reducing them to the sole possession of five hundred acres of land, that Tiberius set up for, and obtained the tribuneship. This was a wise step in an ambitious man, who had need of a great interest in order to raise great passions; but it would have been absurd in a magistrate, whose view was only to alleviate the misery of the people, and provide for their subsistence. The whole body of Roman citizens, affected by the Licinian law, made head against Tiberius, who was become the darling of the multitude. With the one, he is a seditious fellow that must be put to death, and, accordingly, they accuse him of aspiring at royalty; with the others, he is the father of his country, the enemy of tyrants, and the defender of liberty. If the tribune had had none but good designs, he would have then renounced his enterprize. Could he have been so blind as not to perceive, that the rich would sooner see the state go to wreck, than be deprived of their riches? The injuries of his enemies provoked his anger, the praises of his followers augmented his confidence, and Tiberius at once piqued and flattered, became more enterprizing. He was content till then, to mourn over the misfortunes of the Romans, to give the miserable a prospect of relief, to paint with art the injustice of the great, or shew how detestable it was that such a number of the citizens of a republic that was mistress of the world, should be overwhelmed with misery,

misery. He appeared rather to be himself inspired with the sentiments of the people, than to inspire them with his; but now he actually invites them to attempt every thing. The cuirasse, with which he was guarded, and which he artfully discovered by endeavouring to conceal it, continually put the multitude in mind, that the great are capable of an assassination, and that the opportunity of again establishing an equality, was then in their power, but that one moment might deprive them of it. The laws themselves are made to give way to Tiberius; with the boldness of a tyrant, he violates such as are contrary to his designs. If Marcus Octavius, his colleague, oppose his decrees, he turns his whole force against him, and by an accusation of his betraying the interests of the people, gets him deposed.

The Licinian law was revived, and the Triumvirs, appointed to see it put into execution, were actually named. The tribune's victory, however, was far from being certain; he imagined he had overcome the rich, and he had only reduced them to despair; he ought to have dreaded violence on their part, and he had taken no measures to prevent or repel it. In this situation of affairs it was, that Attalus before he died named the Roman people his heir. Tiberius, emboldened by his first success, and in order effectually to make himself master of Rome, proposed that this succession should be distributed among the poor citizens; but the bare proposal of this law, at a time when the minds of the people were in the utmost ferment, raised so great commotions, that the tribune was sensible at last of the danger with which he was threatened. His tribunal itself appeared now an asylum not safe enough against his enemies, and the tumult of the assembly not allowing him to be heard, he put his hands

hands several times to his head, in order to signify to the people, that there was a design upon his life, and that it was necessary to take arms and defend him. At this gesture, the rich thinking they had found the happy and long wished for pretence, of overpowering Tiberius by open violence; they cry out that he had assumed the diadem of Attalus, and pretend to be persuaded, that he demanded of the multitude to crown him king of Rome. The only question now is to save the public liberty ready to perish; and Scipio Nafica, followed by all the pretended enemies of royalty, pours with drawn arms upon the populace, which surrounded Tiberius's tribunal. They are easily dispersed, and the magistrate, obliged to yield to the storm, and betake himself to flight, is assassinated by one of his colleagues.

Caius Gracchus solicited the tribuneship, only with a view to revenge his brother's death; but he found the power of that office prodigiously diminished. He ought to have been the magistrate of the people, and he was only the head of a rabble driven from their estates, oppressed with wants, pusillanimous when not transported by passion, and which no longer had any share in the public administration. The tribunes, who had succeeded Tiberius, had been rich and avaricious, but not ambitious men; so that far from proposing the re-establishment of the Licinian law, from flattering the passions of the multitude, and from keeping up a spirit of audaciousness and sedition, to which they began to be accustomed, they entered into the association which the rich had formed, in order more effectually to resist the laws that condemned them, and had contributed with their whole power to confirm the absolute authority to which the rich aspired.

Caius,

Caius, who had no resource from the present government of the commonwealth, to restore his office to its antient splendor, and the credit his ambition wanted, bethought himself of granting the freedom of Rome, to several considerable states in its neighbourhood. After this the tribune, assisted by his new adherents, roused the courage of the people, threatened the rich with the principal forces of Italy, and was really in a condition to oppress them.

He might have rendered himself as powerful as Cæsar and Sylla were afterwards, if, taught by the tragical end of his brother, he had attended to his interest, to the present situation of the Romans, and to what he had to fear from the great. Had he done this, he must have been convinced, that all moderation ruins a bold undertaking, and that force alone is able to make it succeed. But, whether that he imagined the minds of the people were not yet sufficiently prepared for a civil war, or that he had more the ambition of a magistrate than a warrior? whether he flattered himself to intimidate the rich by his alliance with the Italians, or hoped to rule them without incurring the reproach of having conquered them by arms? he resolved to proceed in the usual forms, and having lost the moment that was to decide his fortune, he afforded his enemies a resource against the blow meditated against them.

They took care not to set up an Octavius to oppose the publication of his regulations. On the contrary, when Caius proposed a law in favour of the people, or of strangers, Livius Drusus, his colleague, laid it down as a rule to enlarge his demands, and to publish at the same time, that Caius was only the tool of the senate. Deceived by this political conduct, the people knew not whom they ought to follow, and found

found their hands tied up for having too many protectors. Caius, whose credit diminished in proportion as that of his rival increased, found himself reduced to the necessity of keeping no measures. Accordingly, in his third tribuneship, he resolved to enact laws, which, by totally ruining the senate and men of fortune, must gain him the whole confidence of the people, and confound Drusus; but his designs being discovered, his colleagues suppressed a part of the billets which continued him in office, and from that time his ruin was determined. Caius, though without any public character, still continued to act the dangerous part of protector of the people; but being accounted only a disturber of the public tranquillity, it was no difficult matter to overpower him. As his only resource, he now, when it was too late, called in the Italians to his assistance. They took arms, and the defeat of his party would have for ever secured the victory of the rich, had not the extremities to which they were driven, discovered the great weakness of the commonwealth, and served as a clear evidence, that every thing for the future, must be decided by main force, and not by the laws.

Before the tribuneship of Caius, the people sometimes murmured against the injustice of those citizens, who had got possession of the riches of the state; but their complaints were always checked by the pusillanimity occasioned by their poverty. They, as it were, in spite of themselves, paid a deference to the rich: and by degrees, they would have been accustomed to this respect, and inclined to think all the advantages of society designed for them. But after these last troubles, they looked upon the great only as public robbers, whose fortunes were raised upon their ruin. Formerly they would have received a decree of the senate

senate with joy, which ordained, that the proprietors of lands should not be disturbed, provided they paid a certain sum to be distributed among the poorest citizens; but now they despise favours, are resolved to hold nothing of any body but themselves, and intend not only to fleece the rich of their wealth, but also to deprive them of the authority they had usurped. The multitude appeared untameable, as hoping to find a Gracchus among the great number of Patricians ruined by their extravagance, who at the same time that they kept up the courage of the populace, were themselves reduced to have no separate interest from the meanest of the Plebeians. The people are not afraid to take up arms a second time, they have a high opinion of their own force, and make themselves sure of the assistance of the Italians, who had been deprived of the freedom of Rome. In effect, they were piqued at the injury they had received, and their resentment, which grew in proportion as the Romans seemed more divided, was the true cause of their divisions.

The rich, however, far from opposing the multitude, by that union which alone constitutes the security of an aristocracy, formed a thousand different factions; and the senate, under whose protection they governed the commonwealth, being composed of men enervated by pleasure, wholly taken up with their domestic concerns, or who had no confidence in their own strength, had not the courage to take a resolution worthy of itself, or the danger wherewith it was threatened. Consequently they could not but be sensible of their having lost a power, of which it was impossible for them to make any use; and the people must of course become so powerful as to make themselves masters of the government, or at least to ruin entirely the credit of the senate. There must have been

a flux and reflux of authority, and dependence, from the one to the other; and this confusion would have continued till some citizen, under pretence of defending the senate or people*, against the oppression of their enemies, seized that power which was, as it were, suspended between the two, and which neither one nor the other could maintain.

It was in this situation of affairs, that Marius began to render himself illustrious. Notwithstanding his obscure birth, he bore an ambition in his heart, that could not be satisfied with seven consulships. He had followed the profession of arms, and rising successively through all the steps of military perferment, he discharged the duties of each station with such superior ability, as might be expected from a man born to be the greatest commander of the commonwealth. He was an enemy to all pleasure, through a kind of ferocity, that made him still more severe to himself than to others; he was indefatigable in labour, diligent, and active, because rest appeared insupportable to him; and his courage, though very great, was the least remarkable quality he had.

The reputation of Marius passed from the armies to Rome, where the people were the more overjoyed for the glory acquired by a citizen of their order, as they had need of a chief to defend them in the continual vicissitude of fortune they were exposed to, and they hoped to find such a one in Marius. This general detested the great as so many competitors, whose influence and intrigues might hinder his obtaining the offices, which he deserved better than themselves. They despise, said he, my birth and fortune, and I despise
their

* Alii sicuti jura populi defenderent, pars quo senatus auctoritas maxima foret, bonum publicum simulantes, pro sua quisque potentia certabant. Salust. in Bell. Cat.

their persons. The forward zeal of Marius was of great use to him; the people raise him to the tribuneship, and he is not wanting to declaim against the avarice and pride of the rich, with that rude, but persuasive eloquence, which is only proper to excite the passions.

If the commonwealth was not then ruined, the reason was not, that it contained in itself any principle capable of defending it against the attacks of a tyrant, in whom the military talents of Marius had been united with the political views of the Gracchi; but Marius had nothing of that ambition which inspires a passion for sovereignty. He had the ambition of a citizen, was desirous the commonwealth should still subsist, that it should be well served, and triumph over its enemies; but he would have the glory of all this be due only to himself, and could not bear that another should serve it so well as he. With these views, he by no means attempted to restore the laws of the Gracchi; it was in vain for him to create troubles, which leaving no method of reconciliation between the contending parties, must have obliged the people and Italians to confer on him the sovereignty. He contented himself with serving the people so well as to gain their favour, and make himself sure of their votes, when he set up for the chief offices in the state.

Marius was made consul, and at the same time the command of the army in Numidia given him. After having restored peace to Africa, he is a second time created consul, and the care of opposing the irruption of the Cimbri and Teutones committed to him. Marius became accustomed to command, and his triumphs served only to quicken his desire of glory, he, at the head of the senate, acted more the tribune than consul. The reader I hope will excuse the

detail into which I am going to enter. Before the Romans were corrupted, their revolutions were owing to the very nature of their government. But after that Rome was threatened with ruin in a thousand different ways, that her citizens became stronger than the laws, and that, instead of communicating her character to events, she received the impression of that of her governors; the disturbances raised in the commonwealth must be ascribed to the passions of these men, and to the circumstances they happened to be in.

The great, to whom the fierce and restless character of Marius was insupportable, endeavoured more to mortify him than to ruin his party; and in order to touch him in the most sensible part, they attributed to Sylla the whole success of the Numidian war. In reality, though only quaestor of the army, he commanded Marius, and prevailed upon Bocchus to deliver up Jugurtha to the Romans. The people thought themselves affronted by the injury done their protector, and in revenge affirmed, that without him the Roman armies would have been wholly unsuccessful in Africa. This trifling dispute, proper only to shew how different the Romans were from their ancestors, became the most serious affair in the state; the only question now is concerning the services of Marius and Sylla, who being intently bent upon each other's ruin, by that means became masters of Rome.

Sylla had the advantage of a noble birth, and besides his martial talents, which were little inferior, if not equal to those of Marius, he was of a quite opposite character, without being enervated by the pleasures wherein he had indulged himself in his youth, he had by this means acquired those graces which are rarely found to accompany great merit, and for which

Marius

Marius * had the utmost contempt, a circumstance that at first set him and Sylla at variance. The one preserved his natural temper on all occasions, and had only one way of conducting his affairs. The other endowed with a natural complaisance, which made it easy for him to pass from one character to another, acted according to the different circumstances he happened to be in, which seemed to unfold his passions one after another. Marius had no friends but through interest, and he abandoned them without shame, and without having the address to make them accessory to their own disgrace. Sylla, on the contrary, piqued himself upon preserving an inviolable fidelity to his. Marius had those vices which politicians sometimes indulge; he was jealous, invidious, ungrateful, perfidious, and cruel; but as these vices sprung from the very bottom of his heart, and not, like those of Sylla, from art, and in compliance with circumstances, they proved the ruin of the one, and the making of the other.

So long as Marius continued to decry the great in his gross way, Sylla never attempted to defend them at the expence of the people; his conduct was more political. As he was the only man in the commonwealth whom they could oppose to Marius, he thought it needless to court their favour. Besides, being sensible, that his rival would take the advantage of his attachment to the senate, in order to curry favour with the people, he himself courted the friendship of the multitude. He threw away his riches among them, flattered their tastes, seemed to favour their pretensions, and, in a word, was the courtier of those citizens,

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whose

* C. Marium consulem moleste tulisse traditur, quod sibi asperissimum in Africa bellum gerenti, tam delicatus quaestor forte obvenisset. Sallust. in Bell. Jugurth.

whose master he was soon to be. By this artful piece of politics, Sylla, who was always sure of the great, increased the number of his creatures with partisans seduced from Marius; and, by uniting the affections of all parties in his favour, put himself in condition to oppress his enemy.

During these transactions, Bocchus consecrated a statue of victory to Jupiter Capitolinus, with some pictures that represented the manner in which he had delivered Jugurtha into the hands of Sylla. Marius, who was already piqued, that his rival had caused this event, cut upon a stone, to be used as his seal, attempted to get these monuments removed from the capitol. Sylla opposed it, and so contemptible does party spirit make mankind, that this childish dispute had kindled a civil war, if the people of Italy, who thought this conjuncture favourable both to their ambition and revenge, had not unanimously taken arms to recover the freedom of Rome, of which they had been deprived. This affair put a stop to the disputes between Marius and Sylla, because neither of them, as yet, dared to appear more concerned for their private interest, than for that of the commonwealth.

Sylla having given the fullest proof of his capacity and success in the social war, was raised to the consulship, and intrusted with the command of the army designed against Mithridates. Upon this unforeseen blow, Marius looked upon himself as little better than a common soldier; and having joined his interest with that of a tribune of the people, called P. Sulpitius, a man void of honour, but daring, forward, and artful, they resolved to deprive Sylla of the command which had been decreed him.

The success of an attempt of this nature, must be the work of violence; consequently it became necessary to

to throw the state into confusion, that Marius and his accomplice, under the pretext of establishing order, might make new regulations, and dispose of offices as they thought fit. Happily for them, the same causes which had armed the Romans against each other under the Gracchi, still subsisted; and without speaking of the Licinian law, or the division of lands, they might make themselves sure of the Italians, who had been acknowledged citizens of Rome, but not in the manner they desired. The articles of the peace bore, that eight new tribes should be made of these new citizens; which was only granting them an useless honour, as the Romans, who composed thirty-five tribes, would continue absolute masters of the government*. The people of Italy therefore demanded to be distributed among the antient tribes; but as in this case their number would have been much greater than that of the natural Romans, by which means they would have had the principal direction of affairs, and even ingrossed the public authority; the Romans could not grant their request, and rather than consent to be the subjects of those, whom they had conquered, they chose rather to subdue them a second time.

It was on this contrariety of interests, that Sulpitius grounded his hopes; for being incapable of any accommodation, it must necessary be decided by force. He publicly declared, that the law which the allies desired, ought to be proposed; he invites them to Rome, in order to second his endeavours, orders them to appear in the Forum with their arms, and on the

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first

* In order to understand this, it will be necessary to recollect what I have said in my first book, that in the assemblies of the Campus Martius and Forum, each tribe made one suffrage, and that every thing was determined by the plurality of voices.

first murmur raised against the law, to pour upon the malecontents. The commonwealth had never been in such a terrible disorder. The Romans durst not appear, and the allies thought they confirmed their rights by committing the greatest excesses. In the midst of this tumult, Sulpitius forgot the end for which he had raised it. The decisive stroke was to seize on the person of Sylla; but he allowed him to escape, and this general immediately put himself at the head of the army he had raised, and which was ready to embark, the tribune in the mean time abusing in a tyrannical manner the victory, which he had not as yet obtained.

Sulpitius, after having established an appearance of calm in the commonwealth, at last gave Marius the commission of making war upon Mithridates; but the joy of this general was of short duration. He with the utmost indignation received the news, that the officers, whom he had sent to take charge of the army in his name, had been massacred by Sylla's foldiers. He took vengeance for it upon the relations and creatures of his enemy; but this was to begin the civil war more like a soldier than a politician. Could Marius expect that Sylla, at the head of his army, would suffer his friends to have their throats cut? Satisfied with revenging himself without the least thought of his defence, Marius sees not the abyss on the brink of which he stands, so that flight was the only resource left when his enemy appeared at the gates of Rome.

Sylla behaved on this occasion with all the haughtiness of a sovereign, who punishes a city that had revolted. He proscribes Marius, Sulpitius, and their adherents; declares them enemies of their country, and lays a price upon their heads. He repeals the law, by which the allies were incorporated into the antient tribes;

tribes; and in order to deprive the people of a power they were unworthy of, he humbled the tribunes by excluding them from all other offices, restraining them from proposing any thing in the Forum without the consent of the senate, and ordaining, that, for the future, elections should be made only by centuries.

The arbitrary proceedings of Sylla was a prodigy so strange in the eyes of Romans accustomed to anarchy, that they could not quickly pass from surprise to indignation. The people murmured and trembled at the same time; and the senate, fully sensible of its weakness, discovered that it would rather have been still in dread of the tribunes, than thank Sylla for the humbling favours which they had received of him. This general, in his turn, was afraid of the consternation he had spread; he was not without his fears, that they would raise the soldiers against him as being citizens, and not yet accustomed to the excesses of a civil war. Wherefore taking the advantage of the remissness of his fellow citizens to punish him, he left Rome in order to make war upon Mithridates.

I shall not enlarge further upon this part of the Roman history. What I have already said, sufficiently clears up the situation of the commonwealth. All the world knows, that after the departure of Sylla, it was governed by the consul Cornelius Cinna, a man who had all those passions which inspire an ambition of absolute sway, but none of the talents necessary to obtain it. I know not if there be a more contemptible passion, than ambition unsupported, either by genius or the love of glory. Cinna's stupidity made him attempt undertakings, with the weight of which he was crushed. In one word, he was a mere intriguer, who, notwithstanding his quality of consul, never acted any other part but that of a subaltern. Having observed, that

that Marius and Sylla had made themselves masters of the commonwealth by means of troubles, he imagined nothing more was necessary to put him in possession of the same authority, but to excite new ones. But before he had well begun to make himself dreaded, he was obliged to quit Rome in order to save his life, and to leave the care of revenging his cause to Marius, who a second time had got possession of the government of the state, and whose party was finally exterminated upon Sylla's return from Asia.

Nothing is more frightful than the picture, which the Roman history now began to exhibit ; even at present, one cannot help trembling with horror at the detestable proscriptions of Sylla *. This general, after having exercised the most cruel revenge upon his equals, had the resolution to abdicate the absolute power, which he had enjoyed under the title of perpetual dictator. This last piece of Sylla's life proves, if I am not mistaken, that, with only a moderate share of ambition, he had acquired the highest pitch of fortune which a man can aspire to. If the thirst of command had made him master of the world, this passion being boundless in its nature, would not have been satisfied by any human greatness. The more we endeavour
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* *Id quoque accessit ut sævitiae causam avaritia præberet, et modus culpæ ex pecuniæ modo constitueretur, et qui locuples fuisset, fieret nocens, sui que quisque periculi merces foret. Vell. Pat. l. 2. Namque uti quisque domum aut villam, postremo aut vas, aut vestimentum alicujus concupiverat, dabat operam ut in proscriptorum numero esset ; neque prius finis jugulandi fuit, quam Sylla omnes suos divitiis implevit. Salust. in Bel. Cat.*

Sylla was made perpetual dictator in the year of Rome 671, fifty years after the death of Tiberius Gracchus, and forty after that of Caius.

to find out Sylla's character, the more we shall be inclined to think, that if he had been at liberty to follow the bent of his own genius, he would, like Lucullus, have studied to acquire glory with no other view, but to make the indolence of a voluptuous life, respected by his fellow citizens. It was the hatred he bore Marius, that determined the fate of Sylla. Less eagerness in the first to obtain the management of the war against Mithridates, would have left the whole glory of being a good citizen to the second. In revenging the cruelties of his enemy, he surpassed them; and finding no safety, except in absolute power, he took possession of it. Here he found a harbour to shelter himself from the storm, and he only left it when he thought the calm confirmed.

The perpetual dictatorship of Sylla forms a remarkable era among the Romans. What is often capable of suspending the greatest courage, appears easy to men of moderate ability emboldened by example. Marius and Sylla, without having any determinate object in view, and without foreseeing what would be the consequence, were compelled by the situation of affairs to make war upon each other, and found themselves invested with the public authority. But afterwards it was the desire of every Roman to tread their steps. The fortune of Sylla was a strong incentive to ambition in all who came after him, who formerly would have been satisfied with the office of prætor or consul. New Cinna's would no doubt aspire at the perpetual dictatorship, and the consuls Lutatius Catulus and M. Emilius Lepidus would have been absolute tyrants, if either of them had possessed the talents of Marius or Sylla. We may apply to these times, what Cicero afterwards said of those that followed the death of Cæsar: "We experience, said he, in a letter to Atticus,

“ Atticus, what never happened to any people ; liberty
 “ is restored, and the commonwealth destroyed ; the
 “ spirit of tyranny survives the tyrant *.

Though the fatal example of Sylla had not been contagious, the villanies to which the Romans were accustomed during the proscriptions, would have soon given them a new master. Those in offices regarded only the places they had purchased, as the means of improving their private fortune. The censors durst not exercise their office † ; the laws were silent, and nothing done but what the passions of some infamous women dictated. All the world have heard of Claudia, that celebrated female intriguer, whom her debaucheries would have rendered infamous in any age less corrupted than this. Be this as it will, she found the secret to sell her favours at a high rate, and by their means to gain friends to her brother, with whom she was accused of having an incestuous correspondence. History has not vouchsafed to preserve the names of one Precia, and a thousand other courtezans, who by their gallants governed the commonwealth in an imperious manner. The least dangerous citizens were those, who, being wholly taken up with their pleasures, and never reflecting that their fortunes were connected

* Doleo, quod nunquam in ulla civitate accidit, non una cum libertate rem publicam recuperatum ———
 O Dii boni ! vivit tyrannis, tyrannus occidit. L. 14.
 Epist. 4. 9.

† Claudius passed a law, by which the censors were not permitted to exclude from the senate, or degrade from the rank of knights, any but those who were accused before their tribunal ; also that they could not judge or condemn them, but by unanimous consent. In the year of Rome 667, the tribunes opposed the election of censors, and the commonwealth was deprived of these magistrates to the year 683.

ned with that of the state, imagined they rivalled the happiness of the gods, as Cicero expresses it †, if the fish which they bred in their ponds at a vast expence, were so well tamed as in some sort to eat out of their hands. The rest were men undone by debts and debauchery, who looking upon Rome as a city condemned to be plundered, either spirited up Catiline to form his conspiracy, or were his accomplices in it. Cato was the only man of honour ; but behaving himself like a citizen of Plato's * commonwealth, in the midst of ruffians, his virtue procured him but weak assistance, and even counteracted his good intentions.

The people, who were impatient to recover their authority, in order to make a scandalous gain of it, could not bear the aristocracy of Sylla. After that this dictator, upon his return from Asia, had distributed the lands of the citizens among his soldiers ; every army esteemed a civil war an advantage, and the legions would not have suffered the authority of their general to be limited. The shocks given to the credit of the senate, made it probable, that a thousand new tyrants would start up ; and this body being fully sensible of their own weakness, thought it necessary to make themselves

† *Nostri autem principes digito se cœlum putant attingere, si nulli barbati in piscinis sint, qui ad manum accedant. Ad Att. Epist. 1. l. 2. Ita sunt stulti ut amissâ republicâ, piscinas suas fore salvas sperare videantur. Epist. 18. l. 1.*

* *Ille (Cato) optimo animo utens & summa fide, nocet interdum reipublicæ. Dicit enim tanquam in Platonis republica, non tanquam in Romuli fœce sententiam. Ad Att. Epist. 18. l. 2. Unus est qui curet constantia magis & integritate, quam, ut mihi videtur, consilio aut ingenio, Cato. Ad Att. Epist. 18. l. 1.*

self a protector, and oppose one considerable name to turbulent and ambitious citizens.

Craſſus and Pompey were then the moſt conſiderable perſons in Rome. The firſt calculated the produce of offices, and filled them rather as a banker than politician. Whatever talents he might otherwiſe have, it is evident, that his avarice rendered him as incapable of defending the intereſts of the ſenate, as to be the author of any revolution. Pompey, on the other hand, who was honoured by his fellow citizens with the title of Great, had already gained the admiration of the public, as it were, by ſurprize. Some juvenile actions that promiſed great qualities, a majeſtic countenance, wherein they pretended to find the features of Alexander, the complaiſance of Sylla, a quick and ready wit, an inſinuating and haughty but popular behaviour, courage, a great deal of liberality, a particular attention to be preſent every where, but principally the foible of the people, whoſe hatred or love is alway extreme in times of public diſtreſs ; all this contributed to render Pompey the idol of the Romans.

He had acquired the higheſt reputation in war, by always offering himſelf, in the nick of time, to put the finiſhing hand to the undertakings of the commonwealth, and reaping the fruits of advantages gained by others. The Romans believed that he had ruined the party of Sertorius ; though this great man looked on him in no other light than that of a ſcholar, whom he intended to ſend back to his parents well chaſtiſed for his preſumption *. After the piratical war, the gratitude of the people made them confound the importance of the ſervice

* The detail of the war waged by Pompey in Spain, may be ſeen in Plutarch ; alſo how Sertorius periſhed by the treachery of his own men.

vice which Pompey had done them, with his capacity ; and in fact they judged of the difficulty of the war terminated by that general, by the extensive power which they had granted him †. Tygranes is conquered, his territories lay open to the Roman armies, Mithridates has no resource left ; in this posture of affairs, Pompey prolongs the war, in order to rob Lucullus of the glory he had acquired. He forgets Mithridates, passing his time with petty princes that implored his protection ; and so agreeably was his vanity flattered by the respect they paid him, that, pardon the expression, he very gravely attends to their bickerings, when he ought to have pursued Mithridates. And at last he only put an end to the war, when his enemy being betrayed by his own family, killed himself in despair. The extraordinary splendor of Pompey's triumph made the Romans blind to his faults, there never having been seen such a sight of spoils and captives ; and as they decreed ten days of public thanksgiving, the double of what had been formerly practised, the people thought that Pompey's merit, as a general, more than doubly surpassed that of all who had gone before him.

He was as bad a citizen as he could, but not so bad as the unhappy situation of the commonwealth made room for. What they had suffered from other generals, made them highly pleased with him for disbanding his army as soon as he entered Italy, and not bringing it the length of Rome, in order to rule there by force. They honour him with the title of father of his country, only because he was not a Marius or Sylla, though his intentions were more criminal than those of either.

He

† The pirates occasioned great calamities to the Romans, but nothing was more easy than to exterminate these robbers. The vast power granted to Pompey may be seen in historians.

He desired the dictatorship, though he durst not usurp it. His tardy ambition, or rather vanity, made him feed himself with the hopes of one day obtaining it; and gave no occasion to fear any violence, provided they allowed him to be the principal citizen of the commonwealth.

Whether that Pompey, encouraged by so much favour, despised the authority conferred on him by the senate, as being ambitious to hold his power of none but himself; or whether he was afraid, that too great tranquillity would diminish his credit, or that he imagined the antient disputes of the Romans, would make him more necessary; he abrogated the laws of Sylla, and by restoring the tribunes to their antient dignity, invited, in a manner, the people to resume their former pride, stubbornness and ambition. This conduct so much blamed by Cicero, and in effect so contrary to the interests of the Romans, was prudent according to the principles of it's author. As he was vain and self-conceited, he might flatter himself with subjecting both the orders of the commonwealth, the one by means of the other, as soon as the antient confusion took place; and by ballancing their several advantages, to make himself their arbiter. Some historians have even suspected he had more criminal views; they have conjectured, that his design in embroiling the Roman state in new disorders was, to make them feel the inconveniences of liberty, and by tiring them with their present situation, oblige them to offer him the perpetual dictatorship.

Be this as it will, if Pompey had had as much capacity as he had presumption, he would have had the success he expected; but far from being the spring of what was transacted in the Forum, he is not able to foresee what course things would take. While he is
wholly

wholly taken up with the debates of the senate and people, and able to impose upon neither party, Cæsar, whose secret ambition was to govern, made the best use of a political behaviour.

Sylla had discovered many Marius's in Cæsar. Hardly was he known at Rome, before he had filled it with his intrigues. He by secret means kept fair with all parties; multiplied the vices of the Romans; had the address to make even his foibles useful to him; and directed the plots of which he hardly seemed an accomplice. It is an object worthy the attention of a philosopher, to penetrate the obscurity with which Cæsar had surrounded himself, lay open the low means to which he had recourse, in order to raise himself to the dictatorship, and illustrate that heroic courage and elevation of soul, which only appeared when he had arrived at it. He had from his youth the same forwardness, the same ambition, and the same zeal to signalize himself, and govern, as Alexander had; but these passions in the king had free play, whereas in the citizen, they were under restraint. Where the one commanded, the other could only act by insinuation. It was necessary that the first should appear in his true character to the Macedonians, in order to fit them for the execution of his designs; the second is obliged to pay a regard to the prejudices of his fellow-citizens, to make a prudent use of their vices, and to remove their fears in relation to his merit and talents, in order to prepare them for obeying.

However great Cæsar's capacity was, he was sensible what a difficult matter it was to form a party able to counterballance those of Pompey and Crassus, in a commonwealth, where affairs changed their appearance every day. He was of opinion, and certainly herein consisted the master-piece of his policy, that the interests of these

two men must be united ; and, that in quality of mediator, it would be easy for him to turn their antient jealousies to his advantage, to seduce their friends, and in one word, to make himself master of their alliance, by serving as the point of reunion between these two chieftains.

Crassus receives the overtures of Cæsar with all the eagerness of a man, who having only possessed the second place, is going to share authority with him who enjoyed the first. Pompey ought to have foreseen, that he could only lose by this association ; from being the superior of Crassus and Cæsar, he would thereby make himself their equal ; but his usual presumption and timorousness, represented these two colleagues only as two tools or supports of his fortune. The triumvirate was formed ; Crassus, Pompey and Cæsar obliged themselves to have only the same interest, to form the same designs, and mutually to support each other with their credit. From that time all the power of the senate and people, passed into the hands of the triumvirs ; and the government, which had been sometimes aristocratical, sometimes popular, or rather a downright anarchy, was changed into a true oligarchy.

Pompey perceived at last the snare into which he had fallen *, and was desirous of breaking with Cæsar, whose power gave him umbrage ; but it was no longer time, for by disengaging himself from the Triumvirate, he would have only filled some inferior place in the commonwealth.

* Nihil prætermisi, quantum facere nitique potui, quin Pompeium a Cæsaris conjunctione avocarem, in quo Cæsar felicior fuit ; ipse enim Pompeium a mea familiaritate disjunctum — Illud te scire volo Sampsiceranum nostrum amicum vehementer status sui pænitere, restituique in eum locum cupere ex quo decidit. Ad Att. Epist. 23. l. 2.

monwealth. Pompey the Great is now only the tool of Cæsar's fortune. He is contented with making a stir without acting; he cabals and intrigues, but without success. In a short time, he only enjoyed, with a sort of stupid insensibility, the power which he could not maintain. He is afraid of perceiving it; and it might with truth be said, that his vanity coming to the assistance of his alarmed ambition, had persuaded him that he had made Cæsar's fortune, because Cæsar had ruined his.

This last had rendered himself too powerful in his government of Gaul, for the commonwealth to appoint him a successor, or to reject his demands with impunity, however contrary they might be to the most respected customs. The friends of Crassus, who had perished in his expedition against the Parthians, were strongly attached to Cæsar. Besides, he had transmitted immense sums to Rome, with which his adherents either corrupted the magistrates, or purchased the offices themselves; his army was blindly devoted to him; he had all those citizens at his beck, whose fortunes were irretrievably lost, if the commonwealth was not ruined; in one word, his whole conduct discovered his ambitious designs. The greater fear there was of Cæsar's usurping the supreme power, the more did Pompey's party, who had declared himself Cæsar's enemy, seem to recover new force. It even became that of the commonwealth; for those citizens, who were averse to tyranny, and unable to provide for their own defence, were obliged to unite themselves with Pompey, as the protector of the laws, or as the least avowed and declared enemy of the public good.

This general, intoxicated with an increase of credit, which should only have made him sensible how much he was fallen, on the contrary, thought he had nothing

to do, but first crush his rival, and then bring his fellow-citizens under subjection, by usurping the perpetual dictatorship, which they delayed too long to confer on him *. Full of such notions as these, he was no less passionately desirous of the war than Cæsar, whose fortune admitted of no farther increase, nor could support itself by the same means it had been made. Both the one and the other is persuaded that arms must either deprive him of his whole power, or make him the absolute master of Rome; and if the commonwealth still enjoys tranquillity, it is because neither of them chose to be accounted the author of the rupture.

In this situation of affairs, Cæsar demanded that his government should be continued, or that he should be allowed to stand candidate for the consulship, without coming to Rome, or leaving the command of his army: a thing to that time unheard of, and which he only pretended to wish for, in order that they might furnish him with some pretext of commencing the war. To consent to either of these proposals, was doing him a real disservice; for supposing he had obtained the consulship, it would by no means have made up his loss in quitting Gaul; or had this province been continued to him, he would have thought himself banished to it, after that obliged to remain there unactive; he could no longer regard his

* *Tanta erat in illis crudelitas, tanta cum barbaris conjunctio, ut non nominatim sed generatim proscriptio esset informata; ut jam omnium judicio constitutum esset, omnium vestrum bona prædam esse illius victoriae. Ad Art. Epist. 6. l. 11. Pompey finding himself deceived in his expectation of having the perpetual dictatorship conferred on him, was resolved to stop at nothing for the future. If he had conquered Cæsar, he would have proved a very tyrant.*

government as a step to absolute power. Pompey, by inducing the senate to refuse the whole, flattered himself to reduce his enemy, either to lead a private life, or if he disobeyed, to throw the whole odium of the civil war upon him. In this he was mistaken, Cæsar being too able a politician, either directly to obey or disobey the senate; he offers to abandon Gaul, and disband his forces, provided Pompey, on his part, disarm and gave up his government of Spain. This artful proposition had all the effect its author expected from it. All those who wished well to the commonwealth, thought it reasonable; and Pompey, too short sighted to subscribe to it, was reduced to the necessity of discovering his bad intentions, and taking upon him the blame of sacrificing the public tranquillity to his personal interest. Why did he not agree to the whole? To believe, that Cæsar was sincere in this proposal, argued downright stupidity; he would have certainly retracted. In short, the passions are inflamed, affairs thrown into confusion, the senate makes a decree against Cæsar, Mark Antony the tribune opposes it, the war is kindled.

Pompey sees Cæsar approaching to Rome, without deigning to fear him: "Whenever I please, said he, to the Senate, that was prudent enough to be alarmed, I shall make him as little, as I have made him great." Still persuaded that he governed the commonwealth, he did not perceive, that Rome was going to have a master. The very night before his enemy was to chase him from Italy, he imagined he needed only shew himself to make Cæsar's army forsake him; or that the earth would produce legions, with a stamp of his foot.

Notwithstanding that Pompey had to deal with an enemy not half conquered, he appeared in his true character. While Cæsar sees every thing, provides against all events, acts with diligence, and thinks he has done

nothing, while any thing remains to be done ; Pompey, for fear of taking bad measures, takes none at all, allowing himself to be determined by the course of events *. His army is composed of citizens, and not of soldiers. They think not of conquering, but enriching themselves by the victory ; and the only dispute among them, is about Cæsar's spoils. Some would have his office of chief pontiff, others his government of Gaul ; these would have his gardens, and those his delightful house at Baïæ ; and they only waited the day of battle to be put in possession of all that belonged to their enemy. The army of Cæsar, on the contrary, desired nothing but to conquer ; it was composed of those legions which had subdued Gaul, and intimidated the Germans and Britons.

None but a man who is compleat master of the military art, is able to remark all the prudence of Cæsar's operations ; but to judge of Pompey's, the same knowledge is by no means necessary. His oversights are all gross ; but the grossest is certainly that, when, in compliance with the complaints and murmurs of his soldiers, who accused him of want of courage and resolution, he led them to battle at a time when, even in his own judgment, he ought to have kept on the defensive.

The

* *Adhuc certe, nisi ego insanio, stulta omnia & incautè. Ad. Att. Epist. 10. l. 7. Quid Pompeius agat, ne ipsum quidem scire puto ; nostrum quidem nemo. Epist. 11. l. 7. Cnæus autem noster ; o rem miseram & incredibilem, ut totus jacet ! non animus est, non consilium, non copiæ, non diligentia. Epist. 21. l. 7. Malas causas semper obtinuit, in optima concidit, quid dicam, nisi illud eum scisse ? Neque enim erat difficile hoc nescisse : erat enim ars difficilis rectè rempublicam regere. Epist. 23. l. 7.*

The battle of Pharfalia †, by giving Cæsar the sovereignty of the Roman commonwealth, made him also master of the whole world, which it had brought under subjection. Under the title of perpetual dictator, this general was an absolute monarch, and the Romans had no other way to punish him for his tyranny and revenge themselves, but by assassinating him.

Cicero complains bitterly in several of his letters of the manner in which Brutus and Cassius had laid, conducted, and executed their conspiracy against Cæsar *. He writes to the former as follows: "So long as we are resolved to indulge clemency, we shall never want civil wars, and enemies to liberty. You know that I was always desirous, the state should not only be freed of

F 4

the

† This battle was fought in the 706th year of Rome, that is to say, 451 after the creation of tribunes, 318 after the tribuneship of Licinius Stolo, 95 years after the murder of Tiberius Gracchus, and 35 years after Sylla had been perpetual dictator.

* *Quod si clementes esse volumus, nunquam deerunt bella civilia. Cic. ad Brut. Epist. 16. Scis mihi semper placuisse, non rege solum, sed regno liberari rempublicam, tu lenius; sed quid melius fuerit, magno dolore sentimus, magno periculo sentimus. Ep. 7. Post interitum Cæsaris quid ego prætermissum a vobis, quantumque impendere reipublicæ tempestatem dixerim, non es oblitus. Magna pestis erat depulsa per vos, magna populi Romani macula deleta; vobis vero parta divina gloria. Sed instrumentum regni delatum ad Lepidum et Antonium. Epist. 23. Acta enim illa res animo virili, consilio puerili. Quis enim hoc non vidit, regni hæredem relictum? Quid autem absurdius, hoc metuere, alterum in metu non ponere. Cic. ad Att. Epist. 21. l. 24. Animis enim usi sumus virilibus, consiliis, crede mihi, puerilibus. Excisa enim est arbor, non evulsa, itaque quam fruticetur vides. Ad Att. Epist. 4. l. 15.*

the tyrant, but of tyranny too. As to your conduct, you have observed a dangerous moderation in circumstances, where every thing should have been sharp and decisive; and our present situation shews which of us has reason on our side, you or I. Our conspirators, he observes to Atticus, have executed a childish part with the courage of heroes. Why did not they lay the axe to the very root of the tree."

In reality, had they behaved like true politicians, they would have doubtless comprehended Caesar's favourites in their plot, as being the instruments of his tyranny, and the only persons who would endeavour to succeed him. But Brutus, who assumed the title of vindicator of the laws, did not think it justifiable to violate them, by punishing as tyrants, citizens, who had done nothing to deserve that character *. The senate ought to have proceeded farther. Such is the unhappy situation of human affairs, that there are desperate seasons, when policy requires the very intentions, and even the power of doing mischief, to be punished. When the senate proscribed the memory of Caesar, they ought to have put Antony to death, and extinguished the hopes of Octavius.

How

* Statuto nil nisi hoc, senatus aut populi Romani iudicium esse de iis civibus qui pugnantes non interfuerint. At hoc ipsum, inquires, inique facis, qui hostilis animi in rempublicam homines, cives appelles. Immo justissime, quid enim nondum senatus sensit, nec populus Romanus iussit, id arroganter non praesudico, neque revoto ad arbitrium meum. Epist. Brut. ad Cic. Here Brutus gives his reasons for the political conduct he observed. The principle he lays down, ought to be the rule of every citizen's behaviour that lives in a republic; but the misfortune was, that the commonwealth of Rome no longer subsisted, at the time when Brutus argued in this manner.

However prudent such a conduct might have been, we must nevertheless allow, that it would have been incapable of settling the commonwealth. The Romans were too much addicted to vice and debauchery, to continue without a master †. Since the troubles raised by the Gracchi, they could be intrusted with nothing but the shadow of liberty, and even that they abused; so that to restore them this phantom of liberty, was only to expose them afresh to new tumults and proscriptions, which must end with their receiving the yoke of some new tyrant. If Cæsar and Pompey, says one of the greatest genius's our nation hath produced, had been of the same mind with Cato, others would have embraced the sentiments of Cæsar and Pompey ‡. This observation holds equally good in regard to Antony and Octavius: if they had put them to death, or if they had been republicans, others would have established monarchy upon the ruins of the commonwealth. The Romans had no hopes of enjoying liberty any longer, unless some citizen as powerful as Sylla or Cæsar, should wholly change the form of the state, and by abandoning all their conquests, compel them to embrace the manners and poverty of their ancestors. But supposing such

† Non aliud discordantis patriæ remedium fuisse quam ab uno regeretur. Tacit. Annal. l. 2. All the antient historians speak the same language; but I shall content myself with adding here, what Florus says in regard to Augustus. Sapientia sua atque solertia percussum undique, & perturbatum ordinavit imperii corpus, quod ita haud dubio nunquam coire & consentire potuisset, nisi unius præsidis nutu, quasi anima & mente regeretur. Flor. l. 4.

‡ The president Montesquieu, in his Reflections on the causes of the grandeur and declension of the Romans.

a reformation practicable, where would the Roman have been found, who had virtue enough, after being at the trouble of usurping the sovereignty, to make this use of it?

It would be sufficient to recount the singular honours conferred on Cæsar, to shew that there remained in the commonwealth not the least spark of that genius which ought to animate republicans. Cæsar is the tyrant of his country, and they call him its father. By the very constitution of the government every citizen was obliged to punish his villainy, and yet his person is declared sacred and inviolable. They would needs have him assist at the public shews in a gilded chair, with a crown of gold upon his head. This is only a slight sketch of what flattery is able to do. In the same city, where the violence offered to Lucretia had formerly raised the indignation of every body against Tarquin, they actually deliberate to give Cæsar an absolute power over the chastity of all the women of Rome. In the public ceremonies, they intermix his pictures with those of the Gods. In short, they build a temple to him with altars and priests.

I am aware, that several writers have imagined they discovered an artful policy in these abominable servilities, the only end of which, according to them, was to render Cæsar odious. But I am of opinion, this is all a mistake; since the people lamented his death, and the senate preserved the same honours for his memory, as they had lavished upon his person. This made them pass that absurd and infamous decree, by which they at the same time approved and condemned both Cæsar and his murderers, his laws and vindicators of liberty*.

The

* Nihil enim tam adfurdum quam tyrannicidas in cœlo esse, tyranni facta defendi. Sed vides consules, vides reliquos magistratus, si isti magistratus, ; vides languorem bonorum. Cic. ad Att. Epist. 13. l. 14.

The weakness of the conspirators, and the effeminacy of the senate, put all the power of Cæsar into Antony's hands. Invested with the consulship, and being the executor of Cæsar's will, nothing could resist him. Under the pretext of executing the dictator's will, he made himself master of the populace and legions, and made the senate tremble. He did, what Cæsar himself would not have undertaken, or even thought of †; and at length disposed of every thing in such an absolute manner, that the conspirators, finding themselves no longer safe in Rome, are obliged to seek an asylum in their governments.

Cicero, who at this juncture began to act the first part in the senate, found affairs in the utmost disorder ‡; without any certain principle, rule, or object in view, they every day took new measures, though never such as were more prudent; and as to the commonwealth, its calamities daily increased. However absurd the contradictory decree, just mentioned, appeared to him, he nevertheless regulated his own conduct by it. He caused them to give the charge of making war upon Antony to Octavius, and prevailed on the senate to confer on him the most flattering titles, though he was sensible, that by this means, he weakened the conspirators, that is to say, the partisans of liberty;

† Omnia facta, scripta, dicta, promissa, cogitata Cæsar's plus valent, quam si ipse viveret. Ad Att. Epist. 10. l. 14. Quæ enim Cæsar nunquam neque fecisset, neque passus esset, ea nunc ex falsis ejus commentariis proferuntur. Ad Att. Epist. 14. l. 14.

‡ Prorsus dissolutum offendi navigium, (republicam) vel potius dissipatum, nihil consilio, nihil ratione, nihil ordine. Ad Att. Epist. 11. l. 15.

erty * ; and though he even foresaw that Octavius, as soon as he was in condition to make himself feared by Antony, would find it his interest to make up matters with him, in order to fall upon Brutus and Cassius, their true enemies, with united force, and to make themselves masters of the Roman people, by again setting up Caesar's tyranny.

It would be a very difficult matter to account for so extraordinary a conduct as that of Cicero, if we were not otherwise acquainted with his character, and the particular interests that must have influenced him on this occasion. Cicero derived from his vanity and philosophy, qualities, which constitutes the good citizen in peaceable times ; but his natural timorousness, deprived him of those which render a citizen either dangerous, or useful to his country in times of confusion, when more courage is necessary than prudence. The dangers of the commonwealth appeared magnified or diminished in his eyes, according as he was more or less personally interested in them. To this cause it was owing, that he never had any fixed rule for distinguishing courage from rashness, or prudence from fear. Sometimes guided by the dictates of his reason, and sometimes hurried on by the foibles of his heart, he had only that policy which is proper to form embryos of designs, and at best to palliate the misfortunes of the commonwealth.

True, he shewed resolution in the affair of Catiline. But, besides that he was fully informed of the designs, and even thoughts of that conspirator, he derived a farther

* Si multum possit Octavianus, multo firmitus acta tyranni comprobaturum iri, quam in telluris: atque id contra Brutum fore: sin autem vincitur, vides intolerabilem Antonium, ut, quem velis, nescias. Ad Att. Epist. 14. l. 16.

farther support from the splendor of his office, the glory of the action, and the good wishes of the senate and whole people of Rome. Notwithstanding all this, he was obliged to offer a kind of violence to himself; and the extraordinary effort of courage, which he discovered on this occasion, was certainly what inspired him with that childish admiration for his consulship with which he always tired his friends. After his exile, he naturally appeared in his own character; and his conduct was the more weak, both as his disgrace † had made a very deep impression upon his mind, and as his vanity would not allow him to lead a private life, though the ingratitude of his fellow citizens, had given him a distaste to the administration of public affairs.

In the beginning of the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, while he endeavours to keep in with both parties, he pleases none; and is at the same time desirous and afraid of acting up to his consular dignity. He resolves to be neuter, repents that he did not follow Pompey, has not the courage to declare in favour of Cæsar, and all this time thinks he has taken the worst course. In the troubles which followed Cæsar's death, it was impossible he could act a part more worthy of himself, or more advantageous to the commonwealth. Surrounded by men who were jealous, envious, without courage to hope for success, and almost accustomed to slavery, the public consternation added

† Non recordeo unde ceciderim, sed unde surrexerim. Fratrem mecum, & te si habebō, per me illa pedibus trahantur. Vobis simul philosophari possum. Locus ille animi nostri, stomachus ubi habitabat olim, concaluit. Privata modo & domestica nos delectant. Ad Att. Epist.

16. l. 4.

to his natural pusillanimity *. Cicero had the utmost contempt for the conspiracy of Brutus and Cassius, and esteeming them no better than deserters upon their retiring to their several governments; he judged them altogether unable to defend the public interest with success against so active a man as Antony, his personal enemy. This made him favour Octavius, with the design of making him his protector, in case the conspirators were overcome. Brutus very ingeniously discloses the whole foible of this policy, when he accuses Cicero of regarding death, banishment, and poverty, as the greatest of evils; of dreading less the ruin of liberty, than the advancement of Antony; and of being capable to put up with a master, who had complaisance enough for him, distinguished and flattered him, and testified a respect for him, even when rivetting his fetters †.

The

* Ita temperata tota ratio est, ut reipublicæ constantiam præstem, privatis rebus meis, propter infirmitatem bonorum, iniquitatem malevolorum, odium in me improborum, adhibeam quandam cautionem. Ad Att. Epist. 19. l. 1. After the death of Cæsar, writing to Atticus, about the course he thought proper to take, he says, assentior tibi, ut nec duces simus, nec agmen cogamus, faveamus tamen. Epist. 13. l. 15.

† Quæ facit, non dominationem, non, sed dominum Antonium timentis sunt. — O magnam stultitiam timoris, id ipsum quod verearis, ita cavere, ut cum vitare fortasse potueris, ultro arcesse & attrahas: nimium timemus mortem, & exilium, et paupertatem, hæc videntur Ciceroni ultima esse in malis; & dum habeat a quibus impetret quæ velit, & a quibus colatur & laudetur, servitutem, honorificam modo, non aspernatur. Eo tendit, id agit, ad eum exitum properat vir optimus, ut sit ille Octavius propitius. Brut. ad Att. Epist. 16.

Cicero

The situation of the Romans was such, that Cicero himself, in a letter to Brutus, was at last obliged to own, that this war was attended with more terrible circumstances than all that went before it. "Whatever, says he, was the event of the domestic troubles where-
" of our age has been witness, there were hopes that
" a shadow at least of a commonwealth would still
" subsist; but at present, the case is quite otherwise.
" If we are conquerors, I shall not pretend to say,
" what will be our fate; but if we are overcome, there
" is an end of liberty *."

Lepidus was the person, who, upon Antony's defeat at Modena, formed the scheme of reconciling him with Octavius. The negociation could not meet with great difficulties. By this means, the one saved himself from utter ruin, and shared the government of the world with two colleagues, whose incapacity or youth he despised; and the other knew very well, that by continuing to defend the cause of liberty against Cæsar's friends, he must remain a private citizen.

The
Cicero deserved these severe reproaches, since he himself confesses to Atticus, that he was not displeased with the power of Cæsar: *ita gratioſi eramꝯ apud illum, (Cæſarem) quem dii mortuum perduint, ut noſtræ ætati, quoniam interfecto domino, liberi non ſumus, non fuerit dominꝯ ille fugiendus. Rubeo, mihi crede, ſed jam ſcripſeram; delere nolui. Epist. 4. l. 15.*

This letter of his was written soon after the dictator's death.

* Nullum enim bellum civile fuit in noſtra republica, omnium quæ memoria noſtra fuerunt, in quo bello non, utracumque pars viciffet, tamen aliqua forma eſſet futura reipublicæ; hoc bello victores, quam rempublicam ſumus habituri, non facile affirmarim, victis certe nulla unquam erit. *Epist. ad Brut.*

The second triumvirate was formed. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus divide the provinces of the empire among them, excepting such as were in the possession of the conspirators. Lepidus joined Narbonese Gaul to his government of Spain; Antony had the other Gauls for his share; and Africa, with the Mediterranean islands, fell to Octavius. Lepidus, who had been created consul, went to Rome, in order to govern Italy, while his colleagues carried on the war against Brutus and Cassius.

Lepidus soon found, that armies, and not offices, gain respect in time of civil wars. In the new division of the provinces, made after the defeat of the conspirators, he was too happy in having Spain continued to him. Octavius even outed him of this government without a war. In order to ruin a man who owes his fortune to chance, and not his own merit, nothing more is necessary but a little art and intrigue. The fall of Lepidus unveiled the designs of Octavius, and ought to have alarmed Antony; but this great man, intoxicated with pleasure, had lost all regard to his glory. Cleopatra's beauty had so captivated him, that his whole happiness consisted in gratifying her, and indulging their amorous passions together. Absolute master of the east, and surrounded with Asiatic pomp on all hands, it never entered his thoughts to provide for his safety. His rival, however, meditated his ruin; and the battle of Actium made him the sole master of the Romans.

The conduct of Octavius, who irrevocably established monarchy upon the ruins of the commonwealth, and who afterwards had the title of Augustus conferred on him by his subjects, merits a particular attention. His setting out in the world was very unpromising; and the reason hereof is much perplexed, by supposing him only

only eighteen years old when he left Apollonia, where he pursued his studies, to go to Rome in order to serve himself heir to Cæsar his adopted father. They represent to him, that this last city must prove his ruin; they lay before him the tragical end of the dictator, and the malice of the conspirators; they even intimidate him, by setting forth the ambition of Cæsar's friends. To this he coolly answered, "I have foreseen all these dangers, and the gods will defend the justice of my cause." How could this young man flatter himself to form a third party in his favour, at a time when the whole commonwealth was divided between Antony and Brutus? Is it likely, that he would be able to withstand Antony, who, under the pretext of executing Cæsar's will, disposed of every thing relating to the succession at pleasure, and attached to his fortune all who were lovers of their own? On the other hand, must not his name, and rights have proved so many causes to provoke the wrath of Brutus's followers, and the partisans of liberty? Would it not have argued stupidity in him, to expect the protection of Cicero, or imagine, that a man of consular dignity, and that so illustrious a one, could be guilty of so effeminate and unreasonable a conduct, as that I have already mentioned? As none in Rome were attached, either to the laws of Cæsar, or to the commonwealth by the same motive, those who in appearance had the same design in view, secretly pursued it by different ways. Octavius, if I may use the expression, seized the hinge of the different cabals of which the two parties were composed. He sows jealousies, forms connections, excites heart-burnings, promises, flatters, persuades, divides, unites, and at last by his political behaviour made himself regarded by the chief men in power, found means to balance the cre-

dit of Brutus, and render himself the terror of Antony.

It is a very surprizing fight to see the world conquered by a man, who after having with great intrepidity faced the dangers at Rome, has not the courage to be present in a battle. His cowardice is no way prejudicial to his fortune, because Hirtius, Panfa, Antony, and Agrippa were all brave men, who knew how to conquer, and because he had the art to turn their victories to his own advantage alone. In a day of battle, his prudence being unable to point out any security against the sword or darts of the enemy, abandoned him wholly to fear; but in other kinds of dangers, his natural timidity vanished before the infinite number of resources and expedients, which were suggested to him by a genius the most happily formed for intrigue, policy, and government.

Born with an ambition that employed his whole thoughts, he was not distracted by other passions; at least, they were all entirely subject to, and seemed to grow out of it. As he was free from these furies, often too familiar with, and dangerous to great men, his timorous temper preserved him in that kind of calm, which is so useful to one fired with ambition in order to project great undertakings, and see them properly executed. He easily, as being the natural effect of a superior knowledge, assumed all the characters which his affairs rendered necessary. He was master of none of those virtues, that form the honest man; had no vices inconsistent with his interest; and being always ready to act the virtuous or vicious part, according as circumstances made them useful to him, he is by turns the friend and enemy of Antony, Cicero, Lepidus, and the conspirators. Without either hating or loving Agrippa, of whose great merit he was
become

become jealous, it was indifferent to him to put him to death, or attach him to his interest by the marriage of his daughter. He is cruel without loving blood, puts a stop to the shedding it neither from satiety or remorse, and pardons when he judges it as advantageous for him to do so, as it had formerly been dangerous not to purge the state of citizens, who were either turbulent, jealous of their liberty, virtuous, prudent, or courageous, and who must be offended at his usurpation and power.

The supreme power in the hands of Augustus, was formed of all the offices of the antient commonwealth joined together. In quality of emperor, he had the prerogative of making peace or war, was the general of all the armies, levied contributions through the whole empire for their support, disposed of all military preferments, was alone entitled to the honours of a triumph *, and in a word, enjoyed all the prerogatives of the dictatorship, the name of which was become odious. As he was invested with the dignity of prince of the senate, and frequently consul, he became the soul of that body, and had its whole authority at his command. In quality of censor, there were no citizens but what were subject to him; he exercised no less authority over the nobility than the people, was controlled by no law, and punished in an arbitrary manner. He was initiated into the va-

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rious

* In the time of the commonwealth, it was not necessary to beat the enemy in order to obtain a triumph; it was sufficient to be general of the victorious army, so that several consuls triumphed for the victories gained by their lieutenants in their absence. As all armies fought under the auspices of the emperors; it was by virtue of this usage, that they alone triumphed, or very rarely granted that honour to their generals.

rious religious mysteries, and had the superintendence of religion itself. As tribune, his person was sacred and inviolable, and the whole power of the people centered in him. From hence there resulted the most extensive power, that ever monarch possessed; and as the Romans could not act but by the ministry of their magistrates, all their actions for the future must be under the direction of their emperors.

Augustus was liberal of his favours, both to the army and people; he took care the city should be provided with plenty of every thing; he made the fortunes of some particular persons, and flattered all with the hopes of doing so by them. Peace was proclaimed; the temple of Janus shut; and the citizens entertained with festivals and shews in abundance, that the remembrance of the commonwealth might never occur to them, without the concomitant ideas of proscriptions, massacres, civil wars, robberies, and oppression. A people in happy circumstances never ask, if they be free, or whether their happiness will continue; and as to the Romans, so far were they from dreading the unlimited power, with which Augustus was invested, that they esteemed it the foundation of the public tranquillity. This prince had the policy to seize the moment, that his subjects compared their past misfortunes with their present prosperity; and, by pretending to deliberate in a very serious manner, whether he ought to continue the empire, or restore the commonwealth, he laid a snare for them, made his high fortune be viewed without jealousy, and in a manner ceased to be an usurper.

Cæsar had the boldness to affirm, that the commonwealth no longer subsisted, and that his will must pass for law. When master of every thing, he had the weakness to desire, that the Romans should be convinced

vinced of it. The conduct of Augustus appears to me much more political. He took upon him the government only for ten years, pretending his strength was not sufficient to support a weight, which his ambition rendered light. He refused the dictatorship offered him by the people *, and would not permit them to give him the title of lord †. In appearance, his conduct was wholly directed by the senate. To it he leaves the administration of the central provinces of the empire; also the privilege of receiving the ambassadors of some kings and free nations. He restores the people their assemblies; consults them concerning the laws he designed to make, after having dictated their answer; and allows them to elect their own magistrates. In a word, affecting to appear only the minister of the laws and commonwealth, he endeavoured to persuade the people that they still subsisted. He respects antient customs, and so far conceals his power, as to appear before the judges in quality of a witness. He does not think it below him to plead himself the causes of persons under an impeachment, whom he might have absolved by a word.

Hence it follows, that Cæsar really promoted the detestable design which he had formed of enslaving his country, when he endeavoured to increase its vices. An usurper ought to humble every thing, in order to raise himself; but to support himself after his usurpation, he must interest mankind in his fortune, which never can be done by rendering them wicked and contemptible. Why did he leave the Romans

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any

* Dictaturam magno vi offerente populo, genu nixus, dejecta ab humeris toga, nudo pectore, deprecatus est. Suet. in vit. August.

† Domini appellationem, ut maledictum & opprobrium, semper exhorruit. Suet. in vit. August.

any accomplishments, but such as suited the character of the meanest of slaves? Because by so doing he would have armed against him every citizen that preserved any sentiment of his own dignity. Why discontinue to fill the senate with men of obscure birth, foreigners, or people of no character; and oppose the licentiousness produced by the civil wars by wise laws? Because this would have been leaving disorders to subsist that must ruin him, since they ruined the commonwealth with the whole power of which he was now invested. Augustus confirmed his authority, by restoring the Romans their dignity; he invites several senators to do themselves justice, by voluntarily leaving the senate. Those citizens who were infamous for debauchery, and ruined by debts, to whom Cæsar used to say, that nothing but a civil war could retrieve their fortune, and who in truth were much concerned to have no master, by degrees became accustomed to their condition; for being caressed, they thought themselves respected. Rome at last was alarmed by the death of Augustus, and it was said of a prince, who should never have been born, that he ought never to have died.

B O O K III.

Argument. Why the government of the emperors was necessarily despotic. The independency affected by the armies, and how they dispose of the empire. Why they lost their authority. The new form of government established by Dioclesian.

WE have seen free people lose the privilege of governing themselves, and notwithstanding escape the devastations of an arbitrary power. The reason

reason is, that the loss of their liberty was not the effect of a sudden revolution, attended with the utmost disorder; but the work of several ages, during which time the balance of power on the side of the prince, and that of the people was so adjusted, as to hinder violent spirits from carrying matters to the utmost extremity. In this last case, there was daily forming, if I may be allowed the expression, a mixture of ancient and new customs, which mutually corrected and attempered each other. When a law began to fall into oblivion, the manners it had given rise to still continued, and in some sort supplied its place. As the government changed insensibly, the subjects preserved a certain dignity that made them respected; and the prince was the supreme legislator, without being able to abuse his whole power. Having his hands tied down by the fundamental laws of the nation, he was afraid to violate ancient customs; and his subjects had rights and privileges to oppose to him. In short, he would not have been a tyrant, though liberty no longer subsisted.

Such has been the fate of most nations; but among the Romans, liberty being destroyed by three bloody battles*, they quickly passed from anarchy to the arbitrary government of the conqueror; so that passions, laws, customs, and prejudices were at once pulled up by the roots, arbitrary power being incapable of limitation. In this case, a plain citizen, without any right, and supported only by force and impudence, makes himself master of his equals. Consequently he must raise the indignation of all against him; so that, in order to escape the punishment he deserves, there is a necessity for his seizing the whole power of the state. Augustus was obliged to leave the Romans

G 4

nothing

* Those of Pharsalia, Philippi, and Actium.

nothing but a deceitful appearance of their antient liberty. If the senate or people had still enjoyed any real power, they would have made use of it to deprive that prince of the prerogative which he affected. New troubles would have disturbed the public tranquillity; and Augustus, that he might not fall a victim to the jealousy of the people, would at last have been sensible how necessary it was to possess an unlimited power.

The virtues and vices of a people, at the time when any revolution happens in their government, are the measure of the liberty or slavery which they ought to expect. An heroic love for the public good, and a profound reverence for the laws, a contempt of riches, and a noble haughtiness of soul, are the only foundation of a free government; and on the contrary, indifference for the public good, a servile dread of the laws, the love of riches, and sordid grovelling sentiments are, as it were, so many chains to fetter a people in slavery. From a mixture of these virtues and vices spring manners suitable to monarchy, which being a mean between a free and despotical government, requires in order to its firm establishment, that the subjects be partly corrupted, and partly animated by virtue and true greatness of soul. The noble, austere, and rigid virtues of a republican, would reduce a monarch to be nothing but a magistrate; and mean and slavish vices, would render him despotical.

After what I have said of the infamous corruption of the Romans, and the proscriptions which destroyed all the honest men remaining in the commonwealth; it will be easy to judge, that the manners of those times, far from seconding the moderation affected by Augustus, must on the contrary have bended their necks to the yoke. Not satisfied that the prince, as I have already observed, had united in his
person

person the power of all the magistrates, which, notwithstanding his great authority, at least supposed him to be the minister of the commonwealth, and to be under an obligation to govern according to the laws; they were for having his authority peculiar to himself, which he was to hold independent of his offices of magistracy. It was ordained that Augustus should always have twelve lictors, and be seated between the two consuls, when not invested with that office. They give him power to assemble the senate on extraordinary occasions *, and without regarding the laws, to do whatever he thought advantageous to the commonwealth, and suitable to the majesty of things divine, human, public, and private.

Possibly, if Augustus had had several successors worthy of him, who, after his example, had been sensible

* *Fœdusve, cum quibus volet, facere liceat; ita uti licuit D. Augusto, Tiberioque & Claudio. Utique, ei senatum habere, relationem facere, remittere senatusconsulta per relationem discessionemque facere liceat; ita uti licuit D. Augusto, Tiberioque & Claudio. Utique, cum ex voluntate, autoritateve, jussu, mandatuve ejus, præsenteve eo, senatus habebitur; omnium rerum jus perinde habeatur, fervetur, ac si e lege senatus edictus esset habereturque. Utique, quæcumque ex usu reipublicæ, majestate divinarum, humanarum, publicarum, privatarumque rerum esse censebit, ei agere, facere jus potestasque sit; ita uti D. Augusto, Tiberioque & Claudio fuit. Utique, quibus legibus, plebeive scitis scriptum fuit, ne D. Augustus, Tiberius & Claudius tenerentur; iis legibus Plebisque scitis, imperator Cæsar, Vespasianus Augustus solutus sit.*

The Emperors were invested with the imperial power by a decree of the senate. Of all which curious pieces, there only remains the above fragment of that made for Vespasian; but this is sufficient to inform us, what the extent and nature of the power of Augustus and his successors.

fible that the excess of power makes way for its ruin *, there might have been formed in the empire certain usages, rules and forms of proceeding, which by establishing a reciprocal confidence between the prince and his subjects, would have served as a bridle to the passions. But the more we admire the moderation whereby Augustus prescribed limits to himself in the exercise of a power, which in itself knows none, the less ought we to expect to find it in his successors. This is the opinion of Marcus Aurelius, whose virtues not only honoured the throne, but human nature itself. He esteemed it a prodigy to have the power of doing every thing, and yet have an inclination to do good only. However, if the successors of Augustus abused their power, they also necessarily became monsters, frightful to human nature. An absolute power so artful and refined, as to keep itself concealed, as flatters before it strikes the blow, and in one word, resembles those slow poisons, whose effects are felt without being able to find out the cause, was by no means made for them. The proscriptions of Sylla, and the cruelties of the second triumvirate, were precedents justified by success, which prepared the emperors to give into the most open and detestable crimes. The Romans, notwithstanding their passion for pleasure, were cruel; and the masters of a people who loved blood †, a passion at present happily unknown among civilized nations, could not fail to shed it in abundance.

Tiberius was master of talents sufficient to reign with glory, if he had been heir to a throne legally possessed by his forefathers; but succeeding only to the
usurped

* Nec unquam satis fida potentia, ubi nimia est.
Tacit. Hist. l. 2.

† Every body is acquainted with the immoderate passion, which the Romans had for the gladiatorial and other exercises of the amphitheatre.

usurped rights of Augustus, he thought himself an usurper. So far from remarking that the Romans, accustomed by forty years slavery to obey, disputed with great eagerness the detestable advantage of being the tools of tyranny; he sees himself surrounded by a fierce people, who had refused the diadem to Cæsar, and obliged Augustus to appear in the senate, and in public covered with a cuirasse; his ear is open to no sounds but the voices of a few, who had still the courage to call Brutus and Cassius, the last Romans; in short, he was afraid of finding citizens, who thought themselves bound by the oath which the first Brutus had caused the people to take, never to suffer a tyrant in Rome†. Tiberius saw dangers on each hand of him, and his natural timorousness by this means becoming a counterpoise to his ambition, he afforded the Romans the ridiculous spectacle of one fired with ambition, who could not dispense with sovereignty, and yet had not the courage to take possession of it.

He puts Agrippa, the grandson of Augustus to death, as his rival; and by secret practices disposes of all the forces of the empire, and notwithstanding pretends as if he would refuse the imperial dignity*. “Augustus, said he to the senate, was alone capable of governing without assistance. As for my part, by directing the affairs of the commonwealth, under his eye and by his orders, I have only learned to know my own weakness. In a city so fruitful in great men as ours is, one citizen alone ought not to be burthened with the whole admi-

“ nistration

† *Omnium primum, avidum novæ libertatis populum, ne postmodum flecti precibus aut donis regiis posset, jurejurando adegit, neminem Romæ passuros regnare. Tit. Liv. l. 2.*

* *Principatum quamvis neque occupare confestim, neque agere dubitasset, & statione militum, hoc est, vi & specie dominationis assumpta, diu tamen recusavit impudentissimo animo. Suet. in vit. Tiber.*

"nistration of public affairs, and I wait to be informed by the senate, what department it appoints me." The fear of passing for, and suffering the fate of a tyrant, dictated these words to Tiberius; but scarcely has he recovered himself from this fear by a feigned modesty, than his ambition is alarmed at what he had done. He is afraid of having gone too far; he retracts what he had said, but in an ambiguous, captious, and ænigmatical manner†; and this man, capable of putting the whole senate to death, if they had not guessed his meaning, at last only accepts of the empire for a time. He takes special care, however, not to fix it to five or ten years, as Augustus had done; this, in his opinion, would have been arming the Romans against himself. "I consent," said he, to take upon me this burthen only so long, till you yourselves think it reasonable to grant some ease to my old age‡."

As Tiberius was constantly persuaded, that his power was too little, notwithstanding it appeared too great, he lived in perpetual contradiction with himself. His only talk is of the dignity of the commonwealth; he flatters the senate, and expatiates with all his eloquence, upon the duties of a prince, at the same time that he secretly

† Tiberio etiam in rebus quas non occuleret, seu natura, seu adsuetudine, suspensa semper & obscura verba: tunc vero, nitenti ut sensus suos penitus abderet, in incertum & ambiguum magis implicabantur. Tacit. Annal. l. i.

‡ Tandem quasi coactus, & quærens miseram & onerosam injungi sibi servitutem, recepit imperium: nec tamen aliter, quam ut depositurum se quandoque spem faceret. Ipsi verba sunt hæc: dum veniam ad id tempus, quo vobis æquum possit videri, dare vos aliquam senectuti meæ requiem. Suet. in vit. Tiber.

secretly endeavours to bring every thing into subjection to his mere pleasure *. Is he guilty of any injustice, which is thought necessary to the aggrandisement of his power? He, contrary to his natural inclination, perpetrates it under colour of some law. He leaves to the consuls, prætors, and inferior magistrates, the exercise of their several offices; but is offended, if they are not blind tools of his will. He is equally afraid of virtue and vice in the persons, whom he designs to employ; and never finding them such as he would have, he sometimes hinders their taking possession of the offices he had conferred on them †.

Tiberius was always distracted by opposite passions. He flattered himself to remove every cause of uneasiness, by sacrificing some men whom he suspected; but his fears, on the contrary, only increased. The more sensible he was that he was become odious, the less bounds did his sanguine jealousy keep, so that Rome became the theatre of all the horrors that arbitrary power, influenced by pusillanimity, is capable of acting. Thinking to put a stop to the public odium, he made that foolish law, whereby the parents of persons

* Dixi & nunc, & sæpe aliàs, patres conscripti, bonum & salutarem principem, quem vos tanta & tam libera potestate instruxistis, senatui servire debere, & universis civibus sæpe, & plerumque etiam singulis: neque id dixisse me pœnitet, & bonas, & æquos, & faventes vos habui dominos, & adhuc habeo. Suet. in vit. Tiber.

† Neque enim eminentes virtutes sectabatur, & rursum vitia oderat. Ex optimis periculum sibi; a pessimis dedecus publicum metuebat. Quâ hæsitacione postremo eo provectus est, ut mandaverit quibusdam provincias quos egredi urbe non erat passurus. Tacit. Annal. l. 1. Libertatem metuebat; adulationem oderat. l. 2. Illum qui libertatem publicam nossset, tam projectæ servientium patientiæ tædebat. l. 2.

sons condemned to die were forbid to mourn for them. In order to preserve the attachment of mankind to virtue, morality frequently restrains from actions in themselves indifferent, but which pave the way to vice. The policy of Tiberius was directed by the same principles; he thought to render his person more sacred, by causing his very pictures, with those of his predecessor, to be respected. Two citizens were put to death, the one, because at a sale of his gardens, he had sold a statue of Augustus erected in them; the crime of the other was his having beaten a slave, who happened to have a piece of money about him with Tiberius's head graved on it. This prince made it a capital crime in a poet, to have abused Agamemnon in a tragedy; influenced no doubt, by the desire he had that the quality of a prince should be respected, or because he was afraid that people would by degrees be accustomed to despise himself.

The commonwealth had a law, which made it treason to betray its armies, excite seditions, or bring the Roman name into contempt by a wicked administration. In those happy times, says Tacitus, they only punished actions, and not words. But satire, which, far from being odious among a free and virtuous people, frequently serves as a barrier against bad manners, appears intolerable to abandoned men, who cannot endure that the enjoyment of their vices should be disturbed. Augustus, whose interest was above all others concerned in proscriptions, ranked libels in the number of crimes comprehended under this law. Tiberius, emboldened by his example, extended the sense of this law, to every thing that offended him. Nothing was innocent in the eyes of this tyrant, surrounded by informers, who fomented his jealousies. As these wretches were favoured, protected, and enriched by the share they

they had of the confiscated estates of those whom they accused, they at the same time, made themselves feared and envied. They ceased in a manner to be infamous; and the more their number increased, the more persons must be deemed criminal. The most innocent words became crimes. They even pretended to discover the most secret thoughts, so that a citizen was not sure to be accounted innocent, though he had neither acted or spoken any thing criminal.

Caligula mounted the throne. This serpent, to make use of the expression of Tiberius *, threatened to devour the Romans at a morsel, and prove another Phaëton to the whole world. He persecuted innocence without pretending to respect it, as his predecessor had done; who always aspersed the character of those he intended to make away with. He wished that the people of Rome had but one head, that he might cut it off with a blow of his sword, and that his reign might be distinguished by some public calamity. Was it not a misfortune great enough, that the world was governed by so savage a monster? This fool pretended to have an intrigue of gallantry with the moon; and believing himself by turns Jupiter, Juno, Diana, or Venus, he performed the office of priest to himself, by daily offering sacrifices of the most rare animals. A new crime against the state sprung up in his time, which was to be rich; by this means, the subjects were fleeced of their riches. But oppression proving too scanty a fund to satisfy his craving appetite, he turned his palace into a bawdy-house, where young women and boys of the most distin-

* Aliquoties prædicabat (Tiberius) exitio suo omniumque Caium vivere: & se natricem, serpentis id genus, populo Romano, Phaëthontem orbi terrarum educere. Suet. in vit. Calig.

distinguished birth, were prostituted for money to the debauchees of Rome.

I pass over these detestable reigns with the utmost dispatch. Claudius mounted the throne, who, as Antonia used to say, was only the shadow of a man. Never was prince more contemptible; blood was shed in torrents; and he himself obliged to humour Messalina so far, as to punish the infidelity or impotence of her gallants. As he was the slave rather than husband of Agrippina, he became a tyrant out of mere weakness, and because she had all the vices of one; or, to express my sentiments more fully, that princess, and her freedmen, who had the command of her, made use of his hand and power to satisfy their several passions.

Rome was allowed time to take breath during the first years of Nero's reign. This prince took Augustus for his model; he is merciful, liberal, and popular; he respects the laws, and is sensible that he ought to promote the happiness of the Romans. But in a short time, he is corrupted by the flatteries of his courtiers. These abandoned wretches, who owe all their fortune to the crimes of their master, spirited up Nero to mischief; they lay before him the contagious example of his predecessors; and in his first criminal follies, he judges of the extent of his power only by the atrociousness of the villanies which he committed. He out-did all that went before him. Caligula only proposed to make his horse consul; whereas Nero actually made his horses senators †. Men of consular dignity were only the principal slaves to the first; but this ignominy was confined within the walls

† Nero caused his horses to ride through the streets of Rome, in the habit of a senator. Hence it was, that the people no longer regarded this august robe, but as a horse's trappings.

walls of the palace. Nero, on the contrary, exposed them to the ridicule of the public, by obliging them to act with him on the theatre, and in the circus, a part esteemed dishonourable among the Romans. "What indignity is it, says Dion Cassius, for the lord of the universe, with the senators and their wives, to act the vile part of stage-players! Strangers, continues he, were astonished, and pointed with their finger to the descendants of those who had conquered them. See here the grandson of Paulus Æmilius, says a Macedonian; and the Grecian only answered, by pointing at the son of Mummius; while the Sicilian hissed a Claudius, and the man of Epire an Appius; the people of Asia, Spain, and Carthage, thought the revenge of their conquest fully satiated, by seeing a Lucius, a Publius, and a Scipio, reduced to act the part of some wretched farce-players."

All these emperors were cruel. But as they differed evidently in this principal part of their character, I ought not to pass it over without remarking wherein this difference consisted. The cruelty of Tiberius had something of the appearance of policy, as being mysterious and studied; that of Caligula proceeded more from a heart, which thirsted after blood. Both fill us with horror; the latter by his avowed assassinations, and the former by the address he used to disguise his crimes. Nero, who like Caligula, was cruel by nature, and like Tiberius by reflection, reduced his madness to an art and certain principles; while Claudius, who was guided only by example, and wicked in imitation of the crimes of others, shed torrents of blood, the value of which he did not understand.

It is impossible to draw a picture of the unhappy situation of the empire. Riches of all kinds were become the

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booty

booty of informers, pantomimes, and courtesans. The title of Roman citizen was contemptible, as being no longer borne by any but freedmen or their children, and because the provinces, as Dion expresses it, had bought the freedom of Rome for a piece of a broken pot. The people of Rome were a lawless rabble, oppressed with wants, who only subsisted by the largesses, or rather crimes of the emperors *, and to whom every thing appeared just, provided their indolence was indulged, that they were supplied with bread, and that plenty of feasts and shews was exhibited to them. The senate was filled with barbarians, and men hardly freed from slavery, who still bore on their shoulders, the marks of the scourges received from their masters. The emperors, seeing every body more worthy of the crown than they, dreaded all their subjects as so many competitors for the empire; they even punished them, if they had the boldness to discover any virtue or talents. Employments, civil offices, and places of authority, became so many snares, wherein it was impossible to save both their life and honour. The lamentable fate of Germanicus was sufficient to inform all honest men, that the greatest crime was the having discharged their duty too well. Magistrates were negligent out of mere policy. The generals, in order to obviate the jealousy and pusillanimity of the emperors, were

* While the commonwealth subsisted, the people thought trades proper only for slaves. This manner of thinking still prevailed after they had lost their liberty; for as those who aspired at sovereignty bestowed great liberalities on them, in order to attach them to their interest, they were neither sensible of their misery, nor of the necessity of working. The emperors kept up this custom, and employed part of their rapine to exhibit shews, and bestow gratifications on the people.

were the first to forward the corruption of military discipline; and they removed their fears, by shewing, that they had no authority over the soldiers.

Some, perhaps, will be surprised that the empire, which was a prey to all the vices of the most intolerable tyranny, and which consequently contained within itself a thousand causes of ruin, did not fall to wreck with such precipitation, as many states less corrupted have done, whose misfortunes are handed down to us in history. But here it is necessary to remark, that Rome resumed, in a manner, all its grandeur under the reign of Augustus. This prince restored peace in Spain and Gaul, and conquered Pannonia and Illyricum. He subdued the turbulent people who inhabit the Alps, obliged the Dacæ to make no more incursions upon the territories of the empire, and carried his arms as far as the Elb. The Parthians forgot their hatred against the Romans, and even shewed them some marks of fear and respect. The Indians and Scythians, whose very names were hardly known at Rome, came to sue for the friendship of Augustus. The Germans, less terrible than they became afterwards, were not then driven upon the Roman provinces by the people of the north, who poured into Germany. In a word, the first successors of Augustus, enjoying the advantage of the great reputation, both for wisdom and disinterestedness, which that prince had gained the Romans, had no foreign enemy to fear*.

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* Nec ulli genti sine justis & necessariis causis bellum intulit (Augustus) tantumque abfuit a cupiditate quoquo modo imperium vel bellicam gloriam augendi, ut quorundam barbarorum principes in æde martis ultoris jurare coegerit, mansuros se in fide ac pace quam peterent. A quibusdam novum obsidum genus, scæminas exigere

ten.

In regard to the domestic calamities which must have ruined the empire, it will be necessary to descend to particulars, in order to shew, how instead of dividing into several independent factions, the empire continued to form only one body. Rome, having learned of each people whom they subdued the vice that distinguished them, was become a dangerous school for all the provincials, as they no sooner came there, than their manners were corrupted. From hence it was, that the vices of Asia and Africa had corrupted Gaul, Spain, and other countries, which certainly would have freed themselves from the Roman yoke, if their valour had not been enervated by pleasure. The same arbitrary power, by which the emperors oppressed Italy, was exercised by their officers in the provinces; which being plundered of all they could call their own, indulged no other passion besides a slavish fear, as their misfortunes were so great, as even to stifle despair*. In their situation, it was impossible they should shake off the yoke, and separate themselves from the empire, without the assistance of the generals who commanded

tentaverat; quod negligere marium pignora sentiebat. Sueton. in vit. August. Addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii. Tacit. Annal. l. 1.

* All the antient historians are full of the oppressions of the provincial officers, who never failed to make immense fortunes. Dion Cassius speaks of one Licinus, a freedman of Cæsar, and governor of Gaul, in the reign of Augustus, who formed a scheme to divide the year into fourteen months instead of twelve, because the Gauls paid a certain tribute by the month. It was a maxim, in the politics of those times, that a happy people are ungovernable; and that in order to keep the multitude under subjection, they must be deprived of their riches.

manded in them, and were inclined to erect them into an independent state; but such a thought could never enter the minds of these officers. For besides that most of them were as despicable wretches, as the master under whom they served, and that a sordid avarice was their only passion, their armies being otherwise disposed, must oppose the execution of such a design.

Though the soldiers in truth regreted the time of the civil wars, when they had enriched themselves with the spoils of citizens; though they could not endure to be employed against foreigners, in expeditions which turned to no profit; and though they would have been glad to have a Sylla, a Marius, a Cæsar, or in short, any usurper at their head, that was obliged to purchase their friendship, instead of obeying a prince, who gave himself wholly up to the enjoyment of pleasure; they notwithstanding preserved something of the antient spirit of the commonwealth, both because arbitrary power had not extended itself so far as them, and because their favour was courted. The legions thought themselves under no obligation to the emperor, but believed it their duty to preserve the empire. Whoever had proposed to them an expedition to Rome, in order to dethrone Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, or Nero, would have found them to a man ready to obey; but they would have esteemed and punished as a traitor, a general who had attempted to make himself master of a province. The very army that offered the empire to Germanicus, would not have agreed to ruin it by dismembering.

In speaking of the causes which concurred to keep all the parts of the empire united, and to preserve it from the ruin threatened by the first successors of Augustus, I have laid open, if I am not mistaken, a

new flaw in its constitution; and that is the spirit of pillaging which prevailed in the army, together with the independency affected by them, and that high opinion of themselves, which made them imagine, they had a right to dispose of the imperial dignity, because the fortune of the empire was in their hands †. It could not be expected that all generals would have the moderation of Germanicus and Blesus ‡. From thence it followed, that the emperors, who had rendered themselves odious by the most monstrous abuse of their power, and who could produce no law in their favour, as having never acknowledged any other besides that of their caprice and passion, were continually tottering upon the throne. As to the revolutions which accompanied their fall, so far from being an advantage to the empire, they were the occasion of bloody wars; and without making any alteration for the better in the tyranny of the emperors, they added that of the legions, enured to blood and plunder.

Such was the fate with which the Romans were threatened; for Tiberius, discovering by the revolt of the soldiers, the spirit with which they were inspired, caressed and flattered them: whereas he ought to have endeavoured to subject them to the same yoke with the rest of the empire. Instead of composing
only

† *Multa seditionis ora vocesque; sua in manu sitam rem Romanam, suis victoriis augeri rempublicam, in suum cognomentum adscisci imperatores ——— fuere etiam qui legatam a D. Augusto pecuniam repescerent, faustis in Germanicum omnibus, & si vellet imperium promptos ostentavere. Tacit. Annal. l. 1.*

‡ We may see in Tacitus, how these two generals behaved in order to quell a sedition of their armies, when they might have laid hold of the opportunity to usurp the empire.

only one army of all the foldiers who were stationed on the same frontier, he ought to have separated them into two or three independent bodies, each of which was to have its own general, and even particular privileges, which would have rendered them jealous of one another. The armies, by this means, being kept within bounds, by the fear with which they mutually inspired each other, would by degrees have learned to obey. It is impossible, that two or three generals, among whom it would have been easy to keep up a constant jealousy, should conspire to promote the same design. If one of them, prompted by ambition, had attempted to usurp the empire, he would have found enemies to struggle with, even in his own province. The emperor, by seeing at a distance the storm gathering, would have had time to provide for his safety, to strengthen the armies attached to his interest, or to bring into Italy a part of the forces of some other province.

Tacitus relates, that under the reign of Tiberius, Severus Cecinna proposed a law to the senate, whereby the generals and governors of provinces, should be obliged to leave their wives at Rome. "These, said he, carry
" with them that luxury, effeminacy, and avarice, which
" renders them so dangerous among us; but as these
" passions are more freely indulged in the provinces
" than under our inspection, they there equally enervate the military discipline and civil government.
" Each wife makes a scandalous trade of her husband's
" power, and the influence she has with him: After
" having sold an office, she likewise sells a dispensation
" from discharging the duties of it."

So far from rejecting such a proposal, Tiberius ought to have added to Cecinna's law, that no general of

an army should take his children along with him. His family at Rome would have been an hostage of his fidelity. The glory of arms and military commands would not have been hereditary; for the sons, buried in the obscurity and debauchery of Rome, would have served as a counterpoise to the fame of the father. The nobility would have been degraded, and no distinction left in the empire, except such as proceeded from the emperor's favour. The generals too, raised to that high station by fortune, would have been less forward to entertain thoughts of raising themselves higher.

I dare not enter into a detail of that monstrous policy, which at present obtains among the Asiatic powers, and which was necessary to men of such slender abilities as were those of Tiberius and his successors, in order to govern with some appearance of justice and moderation. The art of which they stood in need is odious, and I should only defile my papers, by laying open its secret springs.

Tiberius, out of mere pusillanimity, neglected to secure the fortune of the emperors; and as to Caligula and Claudius, they were monsters no less stupid than furious, who imagined they provided sufficiently for their safety, by crushing to pieces all who approached them. It is surprising, that neither of them experienced the fate of Nero, and that C. Julius Vindex was the first who thought it his duty to do justice to oppressed mankind.

This illustrious Gaul had long lamented the unhappy fate of his country. He was brave, haughty, and enterprising. Having assembled all the men of honour and character then to be found in Gaul, he opened to them his design against Nero, in the following words:

words: " Friends, said he, this monster has plundered
" the whole earth, at least so much of it as has
" the misfortune to be subject to his tyranny. The
" greatest part of the Roman senate has perished by
" his orders; he has also put his mother to death,
" after having been guilty of incest with her. I
" shall not take upon me to enumerate the murders,
" oppression, and rapine of Nero; for who is able
" to reckon them up? But I myself am a witness of
" his base practices, and you ought to believe what
" I am going to relate; I have seen this man, if it
" be allowable to give that name to the wife of
" Pythagoras, I have seen him, I say, in the dress of
" a comedian, singing verses on the stage, acting the
" part of a slave, and even that of a common strum-
" pet; I have seen him loaded with irons, become preg-
" nant, and then brought to bed. He has really act-
" ed the most unaccountable stories related in fable.
" Which of you will give the titles of Cæsar and
" Augustus to this Thyestes, to this Œdipus, to this
" Alcmeon, to this Orestes? Awake from your lethargy,
" my friends; by your patience in suffering the crimes
" of Nero, you will become his accomplices: take
" pity then upon yourselves. The eyes of every Ro-
" man are fixed upon you, expecting your assistance;
" let us go then, and, by delivering the whole world
" from slavery, justify the wisdom of the gods."

Vindex gave the empire to Galba, who, notwith-
standing the reputation he had acquired as a ge-
neral, proved so weak, so irresolute, and so wavering
in his conduct, as shewed upon what unsettled founda-
tion the authority of the emperors was establish-
ed. And indeed, he never would have obtained the
imperial dignity, if it had been so much as possible

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to miscarry in an attempt against Nero *. When deprived of the counsel and support of Vindex, who unhappily was killed in the beginning of his enterprise, he knows not what course to take. The Romans themselves are obliged to encourage him to perfect his revolt, by calling him to their assistance. He has not the courage to continue his march to Rome, till he is informed, that the senate, who were more courageous than he, had condemned the tyrant to death, and that Nero, betaking himself to flight, was abandoned by every body.

Galba was in the empire, what Sylla had been in the commonwealth. The latter made the Romans sensible, that they were no longer worthy of being free, and gave the first contagious example of tyranny. The other gave the first example of a revolt, and dethroning of an emperor; for by mounting the throne, he gave the world to understand, that nothing else was necessary but courage to imitate him. He quickened the desire which the armies had for civil war, and revealed a secret fatal to the Romans, that an emperor could be proclaimed elsewhere than at Rome, and without the consent of the senate †.

Though

* Nero disregarded the news brought him of the revolt of his army, contenting himself with setting a price upon Vindex's head. In this situation of affairs, he assembled the senate, and all he communicates to them, is a discovery of his own, whereby the sounds of the water-organ were rendered stronger and more harmonious. Afterwards, when he saw that the legions of Germany had joined those of Gaul, he despaired of maintaining the empire, and according to some, entertained thoughts of retiring to Egypt, hoping to gain a livelihood, by teaching to play on the lyre.

† Evulgato imperii arcano, posse principem alibi quam Romæ fieri. Tacit. hist. l. 1.

Though Galba was less established on the throne, than any of his predecessors, he used no precaution for his safety. On the contrary, he allowed himself to be wholly ruled by three obscure fellows, whom the Romans called his *Pædagogues*. These, in their turns, governed him by different foibles, so that he was always changing from one vice to another. He was despised by the citizens, and rendered himself odious to the soldiers by his avarice. After they had made an emperor, it was a very difficult task to manage them. They accounted it a crime in Galba, to have a certain dignity in commanding, the habit of which he had learned at the head of the Spanish legions.

Otho, who was liberal to prodigality, avaricious, full of ambition, of an artful behaviour, and capable of undertaking every thing, where crimes were only necessary to obtain success, aspires at the empire. He gained the *Prætorian* guards by the basest flattery, and caused himself to be proclaimed emperor; but the moment of his exaltation, was almost that of his fall. Vitellius no sooner heard of Galba's death, than he demanded the empire of the army which he commanded in Germany. Otho seeing his enemy approaching, had recourse to the senate, and endeavoured in some sort to make them his protectors; but what could that body do, in the low condition to which they had been reduced?

Vitellius was come of a scandalous, or at least an obscure birth. He was sold by his father, the most notorious flatterer in Rome, to be the instrument of a prince's pleasure, by whose means he expected to make his fortune. It was in the *Caprean* court, that he acquired such a mastery in villainous practices, as merited the confidence and contempt of Caligula and Nero. His promotion to the empire caused the legions

legions in Mœsia and Pannonia to take arms, and Vespasian, who then commanded in Judea, was saluted emperor. Vitellius by no means made him purchase the empire at a high rate. He was so stupified by debauchery, as to see his ruin approaching without concern. He even had not the prudence to follow Otho's example, by leaving off his drunkenness for a moment; for had he endeavoured to conceal his despair, under the appearance of courage and resolution, he would have left it a doubt with posterity, whether he did not die a great man.

So many successive revolutions, which had always proved successful, and wherein the legions had disposed of the empire as they thought fit, confirmed in some sort, the right which the soldiers believed they had of making emperors. They said, in favour of their pretensions, that the dignity of emperor was purely military, and that during the commonwealth, the armies had conferred it upon, or refused it to their generals at pleasure. They remembered, that after the death of Caligula, some soldiers of the Prætorian guards, who had gone into the palace merely for plunder, happening to meet Claudius, saluted him emperor; while the senate was assembled to no purpose, in order to establish a new form of government. Nero furnished them with a title still stronger; he caused himself to be proclaimed by the troops before he appeared in the senate*. When Galba resolved to associate Piso, he neither applied to the magistrates or senate, but went into the camp of the Prætorian guards, to get his decree confirmed.

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* *Sententiam militum secuta patrum consulta. Tacit. Annal. l. 12.*

Inde raptim adpellatis militibus ad curiam delatus est. Suet. in vit. Neronis.

In a state where for a long time no other right, but that of force, was known, and where arbitrary power had transformed all the citizens into slaves, the proceedings of the army must appear legal, and nothing dare to resist them: In reality, after they had disposed of the empire in favour of the generals, they would have begun to act the tyrant, if the wisdom of Vespasian and his successors had not put a stop to this growing mischief. Vespasian was no shedder of blood. He applied himself to repair by his oeconomy, the evils which had been occasioned by the prodigality and rapine of his predecessors; he reformed several abuses, respected the senate, gave new life to the laws which were turned obsolete, and by his vigilance and address kept the army to their duty. His son Titus banished all informers from Rome, so that to be informed against, was no longer enough to be esteemed guilty. A prince, who thought he had lost those days wherein he had done no good, did not imagine it possible for any to be guilty of treason: As he had the greatest regard for his subjects, his virtues, and the public happiness were his guard; and the legions were obedient, because a revolt would have made them odious.

The empire began to be happy, when Domitian plunged it again into all the horrors, which it had experienced under Nero. Proscriptions, informers, tumults, and crimes of treason are revived. To have the reputation of a philosopher, exposes to ruin. A woman is put to death for having undressed herself before the emperor's statue. Here follows a new kind of tyranny: Domitian had always a number of astrologers with him, whom he caused to draw the horoscopes of all the great men in the empire; and these quacks
had

had no other way of saving their lives, but by predicting misfortunes and calamities to them.

This monster would have lost the empire by a revolt of the armies, notwithstanding that by augmenting their pay, he shared with them the fruits of his oppressions, if his domestics, who were weary of dreading him, had not, in spite of all the favours they received, made away with him.

His successor Nerva governed with great moderation, as being convinced, that a free people constitute the grandeur of a prince, who gains their affection. He invites every citizen to go and search the palace for what Domitian had robbed them off. He lessened the number of festivals, shews, and useless expences. He would not permit either statues, or triumphal arches to be erected to him, as judging it a species of flattery; and it was not without reason that he said, he was not afraid to abdicate the empire, and give an account of his conduct as emperor in the character of a plain citizen. But what crowns the elogy of Nerva, is his adopting Trajan; a prince, who ought to be a pattern to all kings, and such a one as providence gives a people to make them happy. In him were united all the talents of a great politician, general, and philosopher. He made himself both respected and loved by the armies. He kept them employed in undertakings of importance, so that by the fame of their victories one would have said, that the Romans were returned to the times of the Scipios and Æmilius's. Adrian reaped the advantage of the good order which Trajan had established in the government; and though he abandoned his conquests, and is by some accused of the death of several persons of note, yet his reign was peaceable and flourishing. He was brave, liberal, prudent, incessantly travelled through
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the provinces of the empire, and was present wherever his presence was necessary. He built new towns, or repaired old ones, secured the frontiers against incursions of the enemy, obliged the governors of provinces to refund what they had gotten by injustice, took care to preserve discipline, make it loved, and keep the generals to their duty. Antoninus, whom he adopted, was the father of his subjects, and deserved to have so worthy a man for his successor as Marcus Aurelius, who, in that stagnation of passions, occasioned by the stoical philosophy, knew no other happiness but that of the public. Nerva, Trajan, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius were persuaded, that the laws are above the prince, and that he who knows not to obey them, is unworthy to govern mankind. As they had no other object in view, but that which at first gave rise to societies, they looked upon themselves, to use an expression of one of them, only as the agents of the commonwealth. "I give you this sword, said Marcus Aurelius to the captain of his guards, to defend me so long as I continue faithfully to discharge my duty; but it ought to be employed in punishing me, if I forget that the design of my office is to promote the happiness of the Romans." We read in Dion, that this prince, when going to make war upon the Scythians, asked leave of the senate, to take money from the treasury; "for, said he, so far from having any thing of my own, the very house which I inhabit is yours."

What these princes did out of a principle of equity, ambitious or pusillanimous ones ought to do out of policy. In order to root out the spirit of independency, and love of power, which had spread itself through the armies, it became necessary to restore the senate that majesty, which formerly had made it the soul of the commonwealth,

monwealth, to interest the people out of a regard to their own liberty, to respect the laws, and preserve the prerogatives of the head of the empire*. By this means the emperor would be protected by a double rampart, a revolt would be esteemed a crime against the Romans in general, and the prince would be invested with all the forces of the commonwealth, for the defence of his dignity.

After the death of Trajan, who had neglected to appoint a successor, the Romans still reaped the fruit of his wisdom. The moderation shewn by the army was the effect of his. They attempted nothing against the public authority, so that the senate, which the emperor had taught them to reverence, freely elected an emperor. This success increased their confidence; they thought they might now exert some virtue with impunity; they speak with abhorrence of tyranny; and that body, which had adored Caligula and Nero as gods, at first refused the apotheosis to Adrian, and was not prevailed on to grant it, but by the repeated solicitations of Antoninus.

Much however was wanting, to give the senate that dignity which it had enjoyed under Augustus. They had acquired a habit of cringing, and their courage not being the effect of a lively internal affection for the public good, appeared, if I may use the expression, like a counterfeit jewel. The Antonines, after the example of Nerva and Trajan, had need to encourage the senators to be free, and to assume the boldness to make themselves respected, as it was impossible

* Nunc demum redit animus, & quamquam primo statim beatissimi sæculi ortu Nerva Cæsar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem, augeatque quotidie facilitatem imperii Nerva Trajanus. Tacit. in vit. Agric.

impossible for minds debased by the tyranny of Vespasian's predecessors, to support a proper dignity for any length of time *. Hardly had the senate begun any noble action, than fatigued by the effort it had made, it falls again into a kind of lethargy that appears agreeable, both as they were accustomed to it, and because it was not possible to rouse themselves from it, but by the practice of virtues, to which they were utter strangers.

As the Romans were no longer possessed of that vigour, which receives and retains the impressions given them, and being a people of no fixed character, they must cease to be happy when not governed by philosophers. By what means could Trajan and Marcus Aurelius give a consistency to the government of the empire? In vain would they have made the most solemn laws to fix the prerogative of the senate, and in short, to establish such a form of government, that so far from tempting an emperor to abuse his power, would have kept him within the bounds of his duty: their laws would have produced no better effect than their examples. Marcus Aurelius was sensible of this truth. From the slavish disposition of the Romans, he formed a judgment of the vices of his successors, and of the power which the army would acquire. This made him on his death-bed recommend his son and his affairs to the legions, and not to the senate.

Commodus was addicted to every vice, as giving into those of his favourites; and as for the senators, they

* *Naturâ infirmitatis humanæ, tardiora sunt remedia quam mala; & ut corpora lente augeſcunt, cito extinguuntur. Sic ingenia ſtudiaque oppreſſeris facilius, quam revocaveris. Subit quippe etiam ipſius inertię dulcedo: & inviſa primo deſidia poſtremo amatur. Tacit. in vit. Agric.*

they were mere slaves to this new Nero. He had no other art to support himself for near thirteen years, but by augmenting the privileges of the troops, and enriching them with the spoils of the empire. But what served to confirm his government, must necessarily prove the ruin of his successors. The soldiers were more sensible than ever how powerful they were, and how much it was the interest of a prince to keep fair with them. As they were accustomed to the prodigality of Commodus, as they had created themselves new wants, and being restrained by no fear, it was natural for them to dispose of the empire by sale. Pertinax obtained it by his liberality; but as he discovered an ambition to act the emperor, rather than the captain of a band of robbers, he was massacred by his own guard, after a reign of three months.

The empire was then exposed to sale in good earnest. "Sulpitianus, said the Prætorian guards to Didius Julian, hath offered us so much, what will you add to it? Then going to Sulpitianus; Julian, said they, is more liberal than you; see what a large sum he proffers; how much will you out-bid him? The imperial dignity shall be conferred upon the highest and last bidder." Thus it was that Julian obtained the empire; and from that moment, the road lay open to every man, who flattered himself with the hopes of creating such troubles, as would enable him to discharge the debt contracted with the army. Otho owed his promotion to the empire, to the intrigues of two soldiers. The soldiers in fact laboured for themselves, and a sedition enabled them to execute what they had undertaken*. The majesty of the imperial dignity was soon rendered contemptible, through
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* *Suscepere duo manipulares imperium populi Romani transferendum, & transfulerunt. Tacit. hist. l. 1.*

the dishonour brought upon it by men of the most scandalous character and meanest birth. Superstition added new strength to these disorders, so that the visionary fancies of diviners and astrologers served for titles to usurp the empire.

As the emperors had engrossed the whole authority of the oppressed senate and people, and as they themselves were notwithstanding the slaves of the army, since the time that it had assumed the power of disposing of the empire at pleasure; it follows as a necessary consequence, that the whole supreme authority was lodged in the hands of the soldiers, the emperor being nothing but the chief magistrate of this monstrous democracy. If a popular government be subject to so many abuses, that politicians make no scruple to say, that a democracy left to itself, is almost always the most intolerable tyranny; what shall we think of a military government, where the most brutal soldier, no less ignorant, and more inconstant than the people, enjoys the supreme power? The Roman soldiery, since the reign of Tiberius, was composed of the most contemptible citizens. Corrupted by bad emperors, and the power which they had acquired, the army was nothing but a multitude of robbers, who thought every thing allowable in them.

The great name of Rome made the people imagine, that to be master of it, and to be emperor, were the same thing. Hence it was, that an army no sooner conferred the imperial dignity upon one of its generals, than he marched into Italy, in order to make his authority be acknowledged there; so that all the advantage which Rome reaped from being the metropolis of the empire, was to see every storm formed in the provinces spend its force upon her. The tyranny of a Caligula, of a Nero, of a Domitian had its

bounds; but at present, whole armies inherit all their fury and power. The interest of these too are opposite, as pretending to an equal right of making emperors. They ravage the provinces, and engage one another, to support the master whom each of them have made; and on another occasion they as readily sacrifice him to their avarice, or the murmurs of a simple tribune. A number of princes just make their appearance upon the throne, others have hardly time to put on the imperial ornaments, and in the reign of Galienus, no less than thirty tyrants arose, who for seven or eight years disputed the empire with each other.

It would be useless to give an idea of the genius and conduct of the emperors, who reigned in these stormy times. If Titus, Trajan, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius, notwithstanding their good intentions, could not reform the Roman government; we may be certain that the wisest of their successors, who were always in danger of sedition or treason, and whose authority was precarious at best, would have attempted in vain to promote the happiness of the empire. Their personal dangers found work enough for all their policy and courage, which were wholly taken up in providing for their own safety.

The soldiery would have maintained the authority which they had usurped, provided they had formed only one body through the whole empire, and had all the same interest. But as the vast extent of the Roman dominions made it impossible to transport the legions from one frontier to another, they became stationary in different provinces, and by that means formed distinct armies, that had no connection together. When one of them had made an emperor, the other pretended to have the same right, and their continual divisions prevented their acquiring fixed and certain

certain privileges, or at least the establishment of some sort of rule and order in their tyrannical usurpations.

Italy and the provinces had been so ransacked, that there remained nothing for the soldiers to plunder; the ambitious too found it daily more difficult to amass money sufficient to bribe the legions. As therefore the one no longer entertained hopes of a great booty, nor the other of purchasing the empire with the same ease, the armies were less disposed to create troubles in the state. The emperors improving this disposition by accustoming them to obedience; they even agreed to give up one part of their power, in order to preserve the other, and prevent new revolutions. Marcus Aurelius had given an example of associations, by taking Lucius Verus for his colleague. This custom was followed by many of his successors; and Dioclesian at length ordained, that for the future, there should be two emperors, who should govern the empire conjointly, and two cæsars who were to be their lieutenants and presumptive heirs *. By

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* Dioclesian associated Maximian, afterwards called Hercules. These two emperors divided the empire between them, the east falling to the share of the one, and the west of the other. They governed, however, conjointly, neither of them looking upon himself as the sole master of the provinces whereof he had the administration. Being afterwards sensible how difficult it was to have their eye upon all the armies, to guard at once the empire against the attempts of the barbarians, and their own persons against those of the armies, they each of them created a Cæsar. Dioclesian chose Galerius, who was entrusted with the government of Thrace and Illyrium. Maximian chose Constantius Chlorus, and gave him the command of Spain, Gaul, and Britain.

this means, the most considerable armies being commanded by princes, who were interested to maintain the government, served to keep the rest within the bounds of their duty.

The empire no sooner ceased to be the soldiers' make-game, than it felt the dismal effects of the tyranny of its emperors. Blood, it is true, was not shed in such torrents, as under the first successors of Augustus. The tyranny appeared less terrible, as the emperors durst not make use of the ministry of the soldiers, to intimidate the Romans by proscriptions; yet, notwithstanding this, it spread misery, famine, infamy, and destruction every where. The emperors being now more settled upon the throne, never thought of reforming any abuse, but gave themselves up to pomp, effeminacy, pride, and the indulgence of all manner of pleasure; and the empire, though drained by a long series of domestic troubles, and though the provinces were every now and then ravaged by incursions of barbarians, was obliged to satisfy the insatiable avarice of several emperors who reigned at once. These emperors in a short time degenerated to ridiculous puppets, ornamented with the badges of imperial dignity. Their whole power was lodged in the hands of their ministers, the women at court, and their favourites; each of whom made a bad use of it, to satisfy different passions.

It may not be improper to make a few reflections upon the new form, which the government had assumed under Dioclesian's reign. All the world knows, that a partition of the supreme power among equal princes, is not proper at all times and places. It serves to create jealousies and suspicion, to pave the way for revolutions, and in a word, to give more free play to the passions, by relaxing the springs of government.

Diocle-

Dioclesian was the first victim of his own policy. Galerius, whose ambition was only quickened by the dignity of Cæsar, could not wait either his death, or that of Maximian; he compelled them to abdicate the empire, and caused himself with his colleague Constantius to be proclaimed emperors. The injustice of these princes, made them suspect each other; they broke off all communication together, the one governing the east, and the other the west; so that these two parts of the empire began to form two powers, in some sort independent of each other. If Constantius had had equal courage, resolution, and ambition with Galerius, the Romans would in his reign have been exposed to the civil wars, which broke out immediately after his death, and caused great calamities in the succeeding reigns.

The want of harmony among the emperors, made them sensible of their weakness; and by obliging them to put confidence in their armies, inspired these with their former genius. They again began to dispose of the empire; and from that time, to the reign of Augustulus, the last emperor of the west, there appeared many rebels, who maintained by force of arms, the titles conferred on them by the legions. The disorders of the empire no longer succeeded each other, but prevailed all at once. The devastations of tyranny and anarchy were felt at the same time.

What crowns the calamities of a despotic government, is, that when it has once got footing in a nation, every thing contributes to render it durable. The more sensible the tyrant is, that the people have a right to complain of his power, the more he endeavours to humble them; and when fear has taken possession of their minds, a general stupidity becomes an insurmountable obstacle to any useful reformation.

120 OBSERVATIONS, &c.

We have seen a proof of this sad truth in the vain attempts of Nerva, Trajan, and the two Antonines to lessen their power. The senate and people had not spirit to preserve the share of authority granted them by these princes. Nothing but the convulsions of a revolution is able to inspire such a people with courage, and restore their liberty. This, however, is the work of despair alone, which is too blind and violent a passion to have any good end in view, or to last sufficient time for accomplishing it. The tyrant is sometimes cut off, but the tyranny continues always the same. Hence it was, that the Romans frequently put one emperor to death, to make way for a successor more wicked than he; and what happened to them, will eternally happen in every country subject to the same kind of government.

Tyranny without doubt has its revolutions, but then it changes nothing but the external form. Every thing conspires to transfer the power of the tyrant to the ministers whom he employs; the instrument which he makes use of to oppress others, must oppress himself in his turn. The history of all the Roman emperors attest this truth; and in order to demonstrate it, nothing more is necessary than to examine what passions are indulged, and what suppressed under arbitrary government, their vicissitudes, and consequently the effects which they must necessarily produce.

The end of the first part.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

ROMANS.

PART II.

BOOK I.

Argument. Of the military genius of the Romans. Their discipline. Their wars with the people of Italy. By what policy the commonwealth improved their victories to advantage. How it could support a continual war. The progress of its generals in the science of arms.

TO proceed no farther than has been done in the first part, would leave the reader with a very imperfect idea of a people, established by force of arms, and which owed its aggrandisement to continual wars. I shall therefore endeavour in the second part of this work, to lay open the policy of the Roman commonwealth,

wealth, to give some account of its enemies, and to unfold the causes of its aggrandisement. The Greeks were much mistaken in supposing, that the Romans owed their greatness to the caprice of fortune. A private person may owe his success to hazard, because one happy circumstance sometimes determines his fate. But a nation, which for many ages was engaged in war with people different in government, character, power, and discipline, and which subdued them one after another, must necessarily owe its progress to its own merit. The Romans conquered the world, because they every where had to deal with men, whose government was not comparable to that of the Romans. If we suppose an equality of accomplishments in the Carthaginians and Romans, and that both states had the same resources and discipline, fortune would have inclined to neither side; the world would have been divided between these two commonwealths, till such time as they had mutually ruined each other. But the truth is, that the bravery and generosity of the Romans triumphed over the pusillanimity and avarice of the Carthaginians.

Rome could not but form a warlike state; the vagabonds who came to people it, wanted every thing; so that necessity obliged them not only to fight for lands, but wives too. The more they were hated by their neighbours, the more sensible they were of the necessity of being soldiers. Excepting Numa, all the successors of Romulus loved war; and in a short time, the banishment of Tarquin, and the efforts made by that prince to reduce his revolted subjects, rendered Brutus's commonwealth entirely military. Rewards, honours, and marks of distinction were bestowed only upon martial qualifications, and as the dangers with which

which Rome was threatened, made soldiers most wanted, the rest became contemptible.

There is no nation, whatever moderation it affects, but has an inclination to extend its territories, and subdue its neighbours; for nothing flatters every passion of the human heart so much as conquests. But a state, where each citizen is a soldier, and magistrate a captain, must for that very reason be animated with the most active ambition, if not restrained by such masterly policy as obtained at Lacedæmon. The Spartans, though soldiers, could not take arms, except in their own defence; besides that, their laws were such, that it signified very little to them to subdue Greece, and increase the number of their subjects. The Romans, on the contrary, regarded their neighbours as men destined to obey them. It is known, that when their whole territory consisted only of a few acres of land without their walls, and when a great part of their subsistence depended on the booty taken from the enemy, they even then fed themselves with the hopes of obtaining an universal monarchy.

The senate having made away with Romulus, feared a revolt on the part of the people; and in order to prevent it, gave out that this prince had been translated to heaven. A suborned witness affirmed upon oath, that Romulus had appeared to him, with all the attributes of a god, and foretold, that his city would be the mistress of the world. What in reality was only an expectation that flattered the vanity of the Romans, became a fundamental article of their religion, after that Tarquin the proud had laid the foundations of the capitol. He found statues of several gods in the place where he intended to build, and fearing to incur their displeasure if he removed them without their own consent, he consulted the augurs

gurs how to behave. These priests treated the matter with great solemnity; they performed several ceremonies, and at last, asked the deities, if they were content to yield their place to Jupiter. Mars, Hebe, and Terminus, it is said, would not leave the capitol. As this want of respect to Jupiter in the inferior gods, was matter of astonishment, and no doubt scandalized the Romans, it was necessary to explain, what might be the meaning of it. The reasonings of the augurs thereon, made a kind of prediction, which foretold that the people of Romulus, whose father was Mars, would never yield a place they had got possession of, that the Roman youth would be invincible, and that the god Terminus would protect the frontiers of the state, and defend them from being invaded.

On the faith of these ridiculously venerable presages the Romans looked upon the whole earth as their patrimony, and promised themselves to triumph over all nations. Happily for the honour of the augurs, Rome was always in circumstances proper to nourish its ambition, and never suffer it to turn effeminate through long peace.

The disputes between the nobles and people, which perfected the government of the commonwealth, tended no less to render it victorious. Besides, the neighbouring states, mistaking the nature of the troubles in Rome, and always flattering themselves, that the moment favourable to their vengeance was come, poured upon their territories, and by frequent incursions, hindered them from neglecting their enemies to mind only their domestic concerns. The Patricians, who were almost always controuled in the Forum, and preserved their antient superiority over the people in the armies alone, endeavoured by continual wars, to divert them from that

that ambition, with which the tribunes in time of peace inspired them.

They acquire a habit of suffering no injury to pass unpunished : The territories of the allies, must be no less respected than those of the commonwealth itself. Besides, the Romans were extremely generous, in granting their protection to all states which asked their assistance. The college of heralds, which Numa had established to judge of the equity of a war, laid down an austere and rigorous law of nations. If the commonwealth preserved the formalities of declaring war prescribed by Ancus Martius *, yet in using them in an imperious and arrogant manner, they rather proved an obstacle to an accommodation, than a means to prevent a rupture. The good faith of the Romans became savage and untractable, as they piqued themselves upon a steadiness of resolution not to be wrought upon by any consideration.

As the commonwealth was engaged in continual wars, it must naturally have made it a particular study to form good armies ; possibly too the disputes of the Forum and Campus Martius were no less useful in promoting military discipline among the Romans, than the study of their consuls. The Patricians, in order to make the people sensible that they were still subjected in some respect, increased the severity of the discipline, were scrupulously exact in seeing it observed, and punished the least breach of it with so much the more rigour, as by that means they secretly revenged them-

* The regulations of this prince in regard to declarations of war, may be seen in Livy, l. 1. Their chief design was to make wars more rare, by ordaining a kind of negotiation to precede them, and certain formalities, that prevented their abandoning themselves to the first impulses of passion.

themselves in the camp for the injuries they received in Rome.

Vegetius attributes the conquest of the world, to the admirable order established in the Roman armies. It is neither, says he, the great number of soldiers, nor even courage, that secures victory, but art and exercise. It was by their discipline, that the Romans dispersed the numerous armies of the Gauls; that they conquered the Spaniards, whose habit of body is more proper for war than that of the people of Italy; that they subdued the Africans, who were always their superiors, both in riches and stratagems; and that they vanquished the Greeks themselves, who greatly excelled them in knowledge. Vegetius ought to have added, that to this same discipline it was owing, that the commonwealth did not suffer from the faults it sometimes committed, because victory made amends for them all; also that it preserved such courage under misfortunes, as prevented it from ever concluding a dishonourable peace.

The military discipline therefore of the Romans merits the whole attention of politicians. It is so wise, and I may add philosophic, that we need only take a particular view of the method employed by the Romans in disciplining their soldiers, to see with a glance of our eye, the most perfect regulations on that head, that the imagination is capable of conceiving.

However nearly interested every citizen was to sacrifice his private interest to the public good, the commonwealth did not depend on these general motives; which, in order to be taken notice of, require reflections that an imminent danger might prevent*. It

seemed

* To be a Roman citizen, was not enough to have the honour of being a soldier. Those who were not worth

seemed to pay no attention to those principles of its governments which made the glory and disgrace, the advantage and loss of the state, to coincide with those of every private citizen; it being expressly ordained, that soldiers should either conquer or die, a law, the force of which it was impossible to evade. As it is the fear of death, that makes a coward fly, and lose his arms, there is a necessity of removing this dread of a glorious death, by that of a certain and ignominious one. By reducing them to this desperate alternative, they are accustomed to place their whole hopes of safety in the efforts of true courage. It would be absurd to expect just and harmonious sounds from an untuned instrument; in like manner the Roman commonwealth did not establish this severe discipline till they had prepared the citizens for it, and made the execution of its laws easy to them.

As they were all by their very birth designed for soldiers, their fathers trained them up from the cradle to the exercises of that profession; for unless they were masters of these, they were incapable of enjoying the lowest office in the state*. Frugality, temperance, and continual exercise, made their constitutions strong and healthy; and the austerity of their domestic life, fitted them for the fatigues of war. The relaxations
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worth four hundred drachms, and for that reason called *Capite Censi*, were admitted into the armies only upon the most urgent necessity. In the year of Rome 489, when the commonwealth began to have fleets, they were employed in the sea service; and when luxury had made the profession of soldier contemptible, the armies were filled with these citizens. Marius gave the first example of this practice, on his going to the Jugurthine war.

* Ten years service was necessary, to qualify one to stand candidate for any office.

and pleasures of peace were military games. All the world knows the exercises of the Campus Martius: There they exercised themselves at leaping, running, and wrestling: There they accustomed themselves to bear burdens, to fence, and throw the javelin; and after they were all besmeared with dust and sweat, the Roman youth refreshed themselves from their fatigue by swimming twice or thrice cross the Tiber.

At Rome, every thing had the appearance of war in time of peace: To be a citizen and soldier was the same thing. Young people were accustomed to travel twenty, or twenty-five miles in five hours; and if there was any distinction made between peace and war, it consisted in this, that the fatigue of the latter was the easiest. Hence it was, that the Romans performed their military exercises in time of peace with arms twice as heavy as those which they made use of in time of war.

With such citizens as these, it should seem that the commonwealth might have filled up its armies without distinction, of the first volunteers that offered themselves. On the contrary, it thought proper, that the honour of being chosen to serve in the wars, should be the reward of the accomplishments shewn by the citizens in the Campus Martius; that the soldier should have a reputation to save; and that the regard paid him should be a pledge of his fidelity, and zeal to discharge his duty.

After the creation of consuls, they every year named four and twenty military tribunes, part of whom must have served five years at least, and the rest eleven. When they had divided among them the command of the four legions to be formed, the consuls summoned to the capitol, or Campus Martius, all the citizens, who by their age were obliged to carry
arms.

arms *. They drew up by tribes, and lots were drawn to determine in what order every tribe should present its soldiers. That which was the first in order, chose the four citizens who were judged most proper to serve in the war, and the six tribunes who commanded the first legion, took one of these four, whom they liked best. The tribunes of the second, and third legions, likewise made their choice one after another, and he that remained entered into the fourth legion. A new tribe presented other four soldiers, and the second legion chose first: the third and fourth legion had the same advantage in their turns. In this manner each tribe successively named four soldiers till the legions were compleat †. They next proceeded to the creation of subaltern officers, whom the tribunes chose from among the soldiers of the greatest reputation.

The commonwealth of Rome, after bestowing so much pains in forming its armies, was in condition to establish the most austere discipline. In order to procure recruits, it lay under no necessity of making those mean compliances which have ruined so many states; and as its citizens were all trained soldiers, it omitted no precautions that were judged necessary for their preservation. Let us only read what historians have told us, of the exercises performed by the Roman soldiery,

* The age of serving in the army was from seventeen to forty-five years. After fifteen campaigns, they were esteemed veterans, who were not obliged to take arms, except for the defence of the city, and when the commonwealth was in extreme danger.

† The number of soldiers in a legion varied, even during the commonwealth. At different times it hath consisted of three, four, five, and even six thousand men. Under the emperors, the legion was composed of ten or eleven thousand.

diery, and we shall see that the commonwealth looked upon laziness and idleness, as the most formidable enemies. It was by rendering the legions indefatigable, that the consuls formed them for victory; for rather than they should remain inactive, they would have employed them in works of no manner of use †. Constant exercise makes good soldiers, by filling their minds with ideas relating to their profession, and teaching them to despise danger, as being inured to hardships.

† We have several examples of this in the Roman history. Among others, Marius, in order to keep his army employed, changed the course of a river, by causing them to dig a new channel for it. The following passage of Cicero's Tusculan questions gives a just idea of the legions, and explains the whole utility of the military exercises. *Nostri exercitus primum unde nomen habeant, vides: deinde qui labor, quantus agminis: ferre plus dimidiatis mensis cibaria. Ferre si quid ad usum velint: ferre vallum; nam scutam, gladium, galeam, in onere nostri milites non plus numerant, quam humeros, lacertos, manus; arma enim militis esse dicunt. Quæ quidem ita geruntur apte, ut, si usus foret, abjectis oneribus, expeditis armis, ut membris pugnare possint. Quid exercitatio legionum? Quid ille cursus, concursus, clamor, quanti laboris est? Ex hoc ille animus in præliis paratus ad vulnera, adhuc pari animo inexercitatum militem, mulier videtur. Cur? Tantum interest inter novum & veterem exercitum, quantum experti sumus. Ætas tironum plerumque melior: sed ferre laborem, contemnere vulnus, consuetudo docet. Quin etiam videmus ex acie afferri sæpe faucios, & quidem rudem illum, & inexercitatum, quamvis levi ictu, ploratus turpissimos edere. At vero ille exercitatus & vetus, ob eamque rem fortior, medicum modo requirens a quo obligatur.* See on the same subject what Polybius says, l. 6. c. 4—7. See also Vegetius, l. 2. c. 23.

ships. The passage from fatigue to rest quite unmans them, by giving occasion to comparisons, which seldom fail to increase the passion of indolence, so common, and so powerful in most men; it also teaches them to murmur, and after enervating the body sinks the mind into downright effeminacy.

Men are only brave by art; and to desire that they should take a foolish pleasure in exposing themselves to death, is going farther than good policy requires, as an enthusiastic courage, which never lasts long, is the only effect it can produce. Far from thinking to eradicate that aversion to danger and pain, inspired by nature herself, the commonwealth of Rome seemed to pay a regard to it. The method it took to inspire its soldiers with courage, was, to provide them with excellent swords, to secure them in a manner from all danger under their shields, helmet, and cuirasse *. So accoutered, they could not but despise enemies less guarded than themselves; from whence it was easy to kindle in their breasts those passions, which, if I may be allowed the expression, enter the composition of courage.

The Romans also interested religion in this affair. The oath which every soldier took to the consul, not to fly, not to abandon his arms, and to obey all the orders of his superiors, added impiety to the infamy of cowardice †. The republic was indeed pro-

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fuse

* The commonwealth provided the soldiers with arms. Their shield was four feet high. Their helmet and cuirasse were proof against the sword, the javelin, and pike. A Roman soldier would have dishonoured himself, who out of an ostentation of his valour had fought without any of his defensive arms.

† This oath was taken before the legions marched out of Rome. At their first review the soldiers took another

fuse in bestowing rewards, but always with discernment. They were by no means arbitrary, which would have made them contemptible. The law itself prescribed the reward, so that neither the favour or caprice of the generals were to be feared. It was not with largesses of money, or distributions of provisions, that they rewarded the soldiers; this would have provoked their avarice and intemperance, and instead of exciting their courage, would have given birth to passions destructive of it.

A soldier who saved the life of a citizen, was rewarded with a different crown from him who had first mounted the wall of a besieged town, or had first forced the enemies camp. Lances, shields, harness, cups, collars were so many different rewards for different actions. Skirmishes, battles, and sieges had their peculiar rewards; so that the courage of the Roman soldier being always quickened by a new object, could never relax.

Those who had been honoured with some mark of their valour, assisted at the games and public shows in a peculiar habit; and at home, together with the spoils which they had taken from the enemy, they exposed the prizes bestowed on them by the consuls. These kinds of domestic monuments excited a noble emulation among the citizens; and the sons being brought up in the midst of these marks of their fathers glory, soon learned their duty, and what the commonwealth expected from them.

Rewards were so much the more proper to make the Romans signalize themselves by great actions, as
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another oath to the tribunes, by which they promised to sequester or appropriate nothing of the booty taken from the enemy, and to bring the whole to the tribunes.

all neglect of duty was sufficiently guarded against by the infamy annexed to punishments. There were few cases punished by the consul with death †; but a soldier condemned to the bastinado for neglect of duty, or even some smaller offence, was not only expelled the army, but durst not return to Rome, as there a father would have thought himself partner in his son's infamy, if he received him into his family. The Romans were ignorant of the pernicious method of reinstating a criminal, by making him pass under the colours. The hope of pardon, if it does not inspire a contempt of duty, tends to make people more remiss in the discharge of it; and a disgrace which may be effaced by a simple ceremony, is no infamy.

The moderns may be said to regard only the number of their soldiers; the Romans on the contrary, would have none but accomplished ones. If a whole Roman cohort was guilty; it was decimated, or at least made to encamp without the trenches; barley was all the provisions allowed it, nor without performing some brave action, could it recover its former dignity.

It is no wise surprising, that the consuls, who had the command of such soldiers, were frequently guilty of oversights without any danger. Sylla confessed that

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the

† The consul alone had power of life and death. The tribunes could only condemn to the bastinado, and they pronounced their sentence by touching the criminal with a batoon; after which the blow being repeated by all the soldiers, the consequence was frequently death. This punishment was inflicted not only for neglect of duty, but also for having attributed the glory of another man's action to themselves, for having thrown away, or lost their arms, or having been guilty of theft.

the courage and skill of his army had sometimes gained him the victory, when he was almost certain to be overcome. How many parallel cases have happened among us, when a general would have paid less dear for a moment's want of attention, nay improved an oversight to his advantage, if he had had the command of those legions, who were not fatigued even by the longest and most precipitate marches, who knew how to act of themselves, whom no obstacle could stop, and who, in the midst of the plenty and tranquillity of peace, were inured to bear hunger, thirst, and the inclemency of the seasons? The bravery of the Roman soldiers inspired the consuls with such confidence, as enlarged their views, and made them undertake great enterprizes. The genius of our modern generals, on the contrary, is much flunted by the incapacity of their armies to execute any difficult attempt. In short, our luxury and corrupt manners are fetters for them.

At present, when the nature of the government established in Europe, necessarily fills the armies with the meanest subjects, there is more occasion than ever of the art of the Romans, to inspire our soldiers with those sentiments which were in a manner natural to theirs. The moderns have in some sort allowed nature to degenerate, under the pretence that strength and agility are less necessary, since the invention of fire-arms. They have not reflected, that the qualities which accompany this state of body, and which are never found without it, serve as the spring of the soul, and are always equally necessary. As our soldiers are generally recruited in towns, and being enervated either by their intemperance or profession *, are neither able to carry all the baggage
of

* Piscatores, aucupes, dulciarios, linteones, omnesque qui aliquid tractasse videbuntur ad gynæcea pertinens, longe

of the Roman soldier, nor perform the same exercises; it is impossible they should possess the qualities either of mind or body, that are always necessary in war. Hence it daily happens, that an army is ruined without coming to blows, or if it should behave with courage on a day of battle, it has not patience to wait an opportunity.

It was by keeping invariably to the maxims which I explained, that the commonwealth of Rome secured its triumphs. After the most considerable losses, it redoubled the severity of its discipline. The soldiers, whom Pyrrhus had made prisoners, were degraded to an inferior order; the knights served as foot, and the legionary soldiers became velites; and neither of them had any other way of recovering their former dignity, but by killing two enemies, and getting possession of their spoils.

Though the commonwealth was still more exhausted after the battle of Cannæ, it banished to Sicily those who fled; though it was obliged to keep twenty-three legions on foot; though the number of citizens failed; and though it saw itself abandoned by almost all its allies, yet would not the commonwealth treat for the ransom of the soldiers who had surrendered prisoners of war. Some perhaps may object here, that the Romans were not ignorant how much Annibal was embarrassed with them, and that they were otherwise in great want of money; but the rest of their conduct shews, that their inflexibility proceeded from another way of thinking.

When Rome laboured under any misfortunes, so far from cancelling the regulations which were thought necessary to prevent them, it on the contrary was more

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sen-

longe arbitrator pellendos a castris. Fabros, ferrarios, carpentarios, macellarios, & cervorum aprorumque venatores convenit sociare militiæ. Veget. l. 1. c. 7.

sensible of their utility. She had reason to judge that after this first favour, Annibal's soldiers might hope to be pardoned for a second offence of the same kind *; so that she chose rather to arm her slaves, who by this example of severity, the gift of liberty, and the decree made on that occasion to die or conquer, must have been inspired with invincible courage.

The Romans, says Sallust, more frequently punished excess of valour than cowardice, and to this rigid discipline, rather than skill of the consuls, the commonwealth

* Auro repensus scilicet acrior
Miles redibit? flagitio additis
Damnum. Neque amissos colores
Lana refert medicata fuco;
Nec vera virtus, cum semel excidit,
Curat reponi deterioribus.
Si pugnat extricata densis
Cerva plagis, erit ille fortis.
Qui perfidis se credidit hostibus;
Et Marte Pœnos proteret altero,
Qui lora restrictis lacertis
Sensit iners, timuitque mortem.

Ransom'd, perhaps, with nobler sense of shame
The soldier may return — you purchase shame
With added ruin. To the fleece no more
Its rich vermilion lost the fucus can restore,
Nor virtue shall its fair complexion gain,
Or clear, by vicious arts, th'infected stain.
If from the toils escap'd the hind shall turn
Fierce on her hunter, he the prostrate foe may spurn.
In second fight, who felt the fetters bind
His arms enslav'd; who tamely hath resign'd
His captive sword, who bravely might have died,
Yet on a faithless foe, with abject soul, relied.

Francis's Hor. Od. 5. l. 3.

wealth owed its victories for a long time. If some particular advantages were thereby lost, that great one of the most exact subordination in the armies was gained, which was more valuable for the calamities escaped by its means, than for any good effects produced by it. The rigour of Manlius, who punished the victory of his own son with death, contributed no less to preserve military discipline, than the untractable virtue of the first Brutus had done the establishment of the civil government.

After a series of successes, it was natural for the Roman soldiers to be prepossessed so far in their favour, as to be persuaded that victory belonged to them, and that religion, and its ministers the augurs, had reason to promise them the empire of the world. This exalted notion is the most proper disposition of mind for a soldier. It gives spirit and fire to attack, inspires with resolution and courage to sustain an onset, and when a superior force throws the soldiers in disorder, it fills them with vexation and rage that greatly facilitate their rallying.

Without doubt, if history had handed down to us a detail of the manners, discipline, and government of the small states in Italy, subdued by the Romans, we should there find the cause of their ruin. The Volsci, the Equi, the Fidenates, the Latins, the Sabins and Falisci, the first enemies of Rome, were indeed warlike and brave nations, who defended their liberty with the utmost resolution; but it is very probable their military discipline was much inferior to that of the Romans. The disputes that prevailed at Rome between the nobles and people, gave birth, as I have already observed, to new accomplishments, and communicated the activity of the passions to their virtues.

In a word, the Romans behaved with all the heat of a people whose aim is a settlement; their enemies
on

on the contrary, with the indifference of a people, who follow an old custom by mere habit. Whilst the commonwealth of Rome makes new progress, and daily acquires more capacity to conduct their affairs with prudence; how many of their enemies were the victims of their own caprice, by inflexibly adhering to a pure democracy, or, if their government happened to be aristocratical, by allowing their liberty to be sacrificed to the passions of their magistrates? These states seemed to acquire power only to make war upon the Romans, which proved the principal cause of their ruin. The Romans could not but be superior, as they opposed an army, that by continual exercise was become invincible, to others which were always made up of new levies, or enervated by peace.

Towards the west, the Roman territories were bounded by those of the Tuscans, a commonwealth formed of several free and independent cities, which had each their particular laws and magistrates, and a common council to transact the affairs of the general alliance. The Tuscans had formerly possessed all Etruria, but soon made an ill use of their power; for hardly had they tasted the first fruits of their success, than they turned effeminate in their manners, and remiss in matters of government. In this situation of affairs, the Gauls having poured into Italy, under the command of Bellovesus, made themselves masters of that part of Etruria, which the Romans afterwards called Cisalpine Gaul *. The same causes that had given the Gauls the superiority over the Tuscans, must be no less favourable to the Romans. It consisted in this, that the Tuscans could not act with dispatch enough to prevent their enemies, or render their designs abortive. They necessarily lost the time, which should

* This event happened in the reign of Tarquin.

should have been employed in action, in adjusting their several interests, and settling the operations of the war. The Tuscans were taken up in consultation, even after the consuls had gained some considerable advantages; so that being always on the defensive against a people who acted offensively, they could not but be overcome at last.

Excepting the Samnites, the Gauls were the most formidable enemy whom the Romans had to do with in Italy. It was in the year of Rome three hundred and sixty-five, that these barbarians defeated the Roman army at Allia, pillaged their lands, and reduced a people, who were to conquer the world, to defend their capitol. These unhappy events, for which Camillus avenged his country, made so deep an impression upon the minds of the Romans, that for a long time they made war upon the Gauls by a dictator alone. The commonwealth, says Livy, found it a more difficult matter to subdue them, than the whole world beside †. This occasioned that decree, whereby pontiffs, priests, old men, and generally all, who by reason of their age, were dispensed with from serving in the wars, were obliged to take arms when they were threatened to be attacked by the Gauls; and Salust tells us, that the Romans fought for their all, and not for glory with them *.

After the Romans had recovered from their first fright, with which the battle of Allia had inspired them, they frequently had the better of the Gauls. This was owing to the goodness of their offensive
arms,

† Plures prope de Gallis triumphum quam toto orbe terrarum acti sunt. Liv. l. 38.

* Cum Gallis pro salute, non pro gloria certare. Salust. in bell. Jugurth.

arms †, every blow whereof was mortal, to their helmet, their cuirasse and shield; whereas the enemy had no defensive armour, and their swords were of so bad a temper, as to require to be set right at every blow †. To conquer the Gauls, whose courage was as inconstant as it was impetuous at first, nothing more was necessary than to sustain their first attack, or to be able to rally again after being broke. As they kept no order when victory inclined to them, their first advantages were of no service; and as they never ceased fighting till wholly routed, their defeats must have been extremely bloody.

That fierce, obstinate, ambitious, brave, and even savage people the Samnites, were overcome, but never subdued. Their greatest losses seemed to diminish nothing from their strength, but on the contrary, to increase their courage. They still run with the same fury on their enemies to deprive them of the victory, which they always thought doubtful, though seldom inclining to their side. By this time, Rome had made considerable conquests out of Italy, yet still they had hopes of recovering their liberty; but their govern-

ment
 † The sword-blade of the Romans was short and very large. Vegetius says, that they always pushed with the point, because they could give only some slight wounds by striking with the edge. *Non de pugna, sed de fuga cogitant, qui in acie nudi exponuntur ad vulnera — Neceffe est enim ut dimicandi acriorem sumat audaciam, qui munito capite, vel pectore, non timet vulnus.* Veget. l. 1. c. 20.

† The Gauls, who fought at Cannæ, under the command of Annibal, had no defensive arms. They must have been very inconsiderate men, when neither their defeats, the example of the Romans, nor the advice of Annibal, could induce them to change their manner of fighting.

ment being like that of the Tuscans, exposed them to the same inconveniences. Besides, the Samnites employed their whole time, when not actually at war with the Romans, in recruiting their armies; whereas these were busy in acquiring new subjects and allies. As the commonwealth of Rome always renewed the war with greater strength, it must at last subdue a people, who at best only recruited theirs.

I ought by no means to take up the reader's time with an account of Tarentum, of Capua, or of the other towns of Campania, and eastern parts of Italy, which then went by the name of the Greater Greece. These, though at first renowned for their wisdom and valour, had not long preserved the spirit of the states, from whence they derived their origin; and when the Romans made war on them, they found them abandoned to all the vices that had subjected Greece to Philip, the father of Alexander the great. They were slaves to the same luxury and depravation of manners, had the same passion for festivals and shows, the same contempt for the laws, the same indifference for the public good, and the same domestic divisions.

The aggrandisement of the Romans must have been owing to some other cause besides their success in battle, and the taking of towns; had this been all, it might have proved their ruin. The art of becoming powerful by war, is very different from that of conquering. Had not the Roman commonwealth, contrary to the ordinary practice of conquerors, made a political use of their victories, the very first enemies they subdued, would have rendered them incapable of conquering other more powerful ones. Tacitus observes, that Athens and Lacedæmon, though they had the most accomplished generals, and brave well disciplined soldiers, who were accustomed to over-

come,

come, were so far from acquiring a great empire, that they became the victims of their own ambition *. These two republics have perished, says he, because they were for making subjects, and not citizens of the people whom they conquered. But Romulus, continues he, having only made war to conquer soldiers †, Rome became the country of the people she had subdued; so that every war increased her strength: whereas the Athenians and Spartans, being never able to make up what their victories had cost them, were weakened by their very triumphs.

It was natural for Romulus to use his victory with moderation. The weakness and necessities of the Romans put him continually in mind, that it was more advantageous to incorporate the conquered among his subjects, by granting them the privileges of citizens, than to exterminate, or make them secret enemies, by depriving them of their liberty. His successors were no less concerned to pursue the same policy; for whether

* *Quid aliud exitio Lacedæmoniis & Atheniensibus fuit, quanquam armis pollerent, nisi quod victis pro alienigenis arcebant? At conditor noster Romulus tantum sapientia valuit, ut plerisque populos eodem die hostes dein cives habuerit. Tacit. Annal. l. 2.*

† Romulus made a law, forbidding to kill, or even to sell an enemy that surrendered himself. The conquered Sabins became Romans, and that prince admitted an hundred of the most noble of them into the senate. Tullus Hostilius, having destroyed Alba, transported its inhabitants to Rome, where they enjoyed all the privileges of the antient Romans. Ancus Martius, after having demolished some small towns of the Latins, observed the same policy. Thus it is no way surprising, that Rome, though at first so weak, could muster under its last kings fourscore thousand men capable to bear arms.

ther they had a mind to make themselves more formidable to their neighbours, or extend their power in Rome, it was equally serviceable to them. But after the banishment of the Tarquins, as the Romans saw the interest of Rome in a different light from what Romulus and his successors had done, they could not but act upon different principles. As no citizen had the same power or pre-eminence in the commonwealth, as that which the kings had enjoyed, there were none who had any personal interest in bestowing the freedom of Rome upon the conquered.

By increasing the number of Romans, the kings increased that of their subjects; the Roman citizens on the contrary, by such a proceeding, would have only procured themselves more fellow-citizens, that would have even shared the supreme power itself. But nothing could appear more preposterous to haughty and imperious conquerors, than to support long and bloody wars, only with such a view; for these new citizens growing daily more numerous, must at last have engrossed the whole authority.

These motives, which influenced the tyrannical behaviour of the Athenians and Spartans towards their enemies, without doubt acted so much the more freely on the minds of the Romans, as their commonwealth was already much more powerful than those of Athens and Sparta. Besides, as the senate was always in danger from the incroachings of the Plebeians upon its authority, it could never attempt to augment their strength by new incorporations; and the whole body of the commonwealth being scrupulous to preserve their manners, genius, and usages, were sensible that they must be altered by admitting always a new mixture of strangers.

If

If the Romans, when they renounced the policy of Romulus, had treated their enemies with rigour, they would have only acquired turbulent subjects, ready always to revolt, and in short, of the very same character with those of the Athenians and Spartans. To prevent all cause of fear on their part, they must have been weakened; but this would not have assisted their masters to make new conquests. Notwithstanding the advantages which the commonwealth had over its neighbours, notwithstanding the wisdom of its government, laws, discipline, and manners, it is a very dubious point, whether they would ever have acquired the sovereignty of Italy; for people who were sensible that slavery was intended for them, would have fought with the courage inspired by despair. Would the Romans then have succeeded in their attempt to subdue Italy? Supposing they had, it is more than probable, that their empire would have been not only confined to that country alone, but never firmly established even there. If they found it a difficult matter to keep this great province in subjection, how would it have been possible for them to carry their arms elsewhere? On the contrary, would not they have had reason to fear, that some neighbouring power would take the advantage of the hatred borne them by the Italians in order to ruin them?

Rome, it must be allowed, was in a fair way to be undone, when Camillus, who had subdued the Latins, stopt her on the very brink of that precipice whither her pride and passion hurried her. "Romans, said he, if to free yourselves from all dread of the Latins, you take the odious course of treating them like slaves, your victory will thereby be rendered useless and even pernicious. On the contrary, it will add to the grandeur of the commonwealth,"

" if,

“ if, after the example of your ancestors, who were
 “ always moderate and just in their prosperity, you
 “ rather chuse to make friends and allies of your
 “ enemies. Will you destroy a people, because they
 “ have bravely defended their country? It would be
 “ unpardonable in me to suspect you could act in such
 “ a manner. Conceal under your favours, the yoke
 “ to be imposed on the conquered. Let us force them
 “ to divide their love between their own country and
 “ ours. By our clemency, we shall certainly acquire
 “ friends, and may safely leave it to their gratitude,
 “ of friends to become our subjects.”

The commonwealth of Rome contracted a habit of forming alliances with the people it subdued. It left them their government, magistrates, laws, and customs; undertook to protect them against their enemies; and only demanded some succours when engaged in war. This conduct, says Polybius, was so moderate, so wise, and so political, that even when the Romans had nothing in view but their own interest, the allies thought themselves obliged to them; it established such a confidence between them, as in a manner united their interests*.

By thus humouring the vanity of the conquered, the commonwealth of Rome had their forces at its disposal, at the same time that its ambition gave no cause of fear†. From thence it was, that the people of
 Italy

* Qui beneficio quam metu obligare homines malit, extraneasque gentes fide ac societate junctas habere quam tristi subjectas servitio. Tit. Liv. l. 26. Plus pene parcendo victis, quam vincendo imperium auxisse. Id. l. 30.

† Whilst the consuls were employed in forming four legions at Rome, to serve during their office, they sent to the allies of the commonwealth, whose turn

Italy, so far from uniting together in defence of their liberty, mutually overawed and conquered each other under the Roman standard ; for as they fought in the Roman armies always in quality of auxiliaries, their triumphs served only to gain new allies to Rome, and render themselves more dependent.

At present we see states take umbrage, and make a mighty stir, if they perceive the least ambitious views in any one of their number. The greatest prince is not able to oppress any of his neighbours with impunity, because the general policy which unites them all together, communicates the whole power of Europe to the most inconsiderable states, and supports them, even in spite of their weakness and defects of government. The maxim, that it is safest to join the strongest side, is now much decried. Leagues and associations are formed ; and though every power may look upon its neighbours as enemies, yet reserving the right it thinks it has, to bring them under subjection, it will defend the weakest when attacked, as being a kind of barrier to secure its own frontiers.

However simple and easy this policy may now appear, after some great men have made it familiar to us, we should not reproach the people of Italy for being ignorant of it, did we but reflect how slow its progress has been among ourselves. To arrive at it, our modern powers, after being long united by commerce and treaties, must have all had the same hopes and fears at the same time ; whereas, when the common

it was to furnish their quota of auxiliaries, ordering them to prepare their soldiers, and keep them in readiness to march on the first notice. These auxiliaries formed also four legions ; from whence it necessarily follows, that the Italians contributed one half to the success of the Roman arms.

monwealth of Rome began its conquests, the states of Italy were no way united. Each city confined its views to what passed in the cities which surrounded it, and each state was the enemy of its neighbours. So far were the Romans from indulging that domineering and absurd conduct, whereof the powers among us who have aspired to universal monarchy are accused, that they studiously concealed their ambition, and seemed to make war less for their own advantage than that of their allies.

We ought not therefore to be surprized, if no league was formed against them, or that they were always able to order things so as to have only one war on their hands at once *. But supposing their ambition had appeared in so clear a light, as to unite all the people of Italy in the same interest, by extinguishing their mutual animosities and jealousies; possibly they were not in condition to take proper measures to stop the progress of the Romans.

At present, should one of the powers of Europe possess superior forces to any other particular state, and even surpass them all in the knowledge of military discipline and experience in war; suppose this power to be always guided by the same principles, to be neither dazzled by prosperity nor dejected by adversity, to possess such firmness

L 2

as

* The Romans successively conquered the Sabins, the Equi, the Volsci, the Fidenates, the Falisci, &c. They never had to do with two of these states at once, which were all subdued, and become allies of Rome, when the war with the Samnites broke out. When these were weakened and obliged to ask for peace, the Latins took arms, and were overcome. The Samnites upon this attempted to revenge themselves, but being defeated, the Romans had leisure to conquer the Tuscans; after which the Samnites a third time tried their fortune in war.

as never to give over its enterprizes, and to be so intrepid as even to prefer utter ruin to an inglorious peace; were there such a power in being, we should soon see these leagues, confederacies, and alliances vanish, whereby the independence of each state is maintained.

In regard to our modern policy, one thing deserves to be particularly attended to, and that is, that it is entirely the work of two passions. One of these is the jealous fear, occasioned by some ambitious people; the other is the hope of being able to resist them, as not having within themselves either all the qualities or resources necessary to raise them to universal empire. Should the wisdom, policy, and courage of any state extinguish this hope, fear would be the only passion remaining, and then Europe would soon lose its liberty.

What the powers I have been speaking of would have done among us, the commonwealth of Rome actually effected among the antient Italians. Nothing but the utmost necessity could make them resolve to break with a people, of whose superior force some city or other daily felt the effects, who received a check only to revenge themselves with the more glory, and whom it was easier to exterminate than oblige to do any thing unbecoming their valour, or contrary to their principles. We have a remarkable instance of this singular steadiness of the Romans, in the war which Coriolanus waged against them. After several victories, this general laid siege to Rome itself. Terror and consternation appear in every face. Each citizen is persuaded, that the fatal moment of the commonwealth is come. They run in crowds to the temples, go in processions, and perform sacrifices. The senate saw their ruin inevitable, and yet never thought of saving Rome by granting Coriolanus his demands, which was the restitution of the lands they had conquered from the Volsci. They despair of every
thing,

thing, and notwithstanding keep inflexibly to their first answer; that the Romans could grant nothing by force, without violating the maxims and customs of the commonwealth; that they would not treat with a rebel, so long as he continued in arms; but that if he withdrew to the territories of the Volsci, they would then act according as justice required.

What appears most surprizing in regard to the Romans, is, how they were able to support a continual war, from the reign of Numa to the end of the first Punic war, when they a second time shut the temple of Janus *. It is a kind of miracle, that one city should never need time to take breath, while none of our modern nations is able to support a war with tolerable success for thirty years, without being obliged to conclude a peace in order to recruit its exhausted forces. But I have already observed, that at first the Romans were only solicitous to increase the number of their citizens; and this the war effected in so remarkable a manner, that in the census taken by Servius Tullius there were found more than fourscore thousand men able to bear arms. If the Romans, after the establishment of the commonwealth, acted upon a different principle by contracting alliances with the people whom they conquered, instead of making them citizens; this new policy was of no prejudice to them, because these very allies bore a part of the losses sustained in war. Besides that the laws of the commonwealth were extremely favourable to procreation, the Romans frequently bestowed the freedom of the city upon foreign families, so that the number of the citizens increased every census.

L 3

At

* This war was finished in the year of Rome 510. From which it appears, that the Romans were engaged in a continual war for near five hundred years.

At present war requires a prodigious expence, and the conquests of a people almost never reimburse what is spent in acquiring them. The commonwealth of Rome, on the contrary, made war without any expence. Before the siege of Veii *, they gave no pay to their soldiers, because their expeditions were of short duration. All they had to do was to march out of Rome, to meet the enemy, to fight them; and if they happened to take a city, it was always by storm. Every citizen carried with him what provisions were necessary, and returned loaded with spoil. When the Romans entertained more extensive views, when their campaigns became longer and more operose, and when they were obliged to pay their soldiers, as being taken off from the cultivation of their lands, and the care of their domestic concerns, war, to use the expression of Cato, even then supported the expence of war. The armies being accustomed to great frugality, lived upon free quarters in the enemy's country; and as the expeditions were of more importance, the booty was likewise more considerable. The commonwealth left a large share of it to the soldiers, in order to inspire them with a love for war; reimbursed what charges she had been at, by a sale of the rest; and after having repaired her funds, had still a great deal of conquered lands to distribute among the poorest citizens, or establish a colony upon.

War therefore among the Romans, served instead of that industry, commerce, arts, and oeconomy, which are the only sources from whence the moderns derive their riches. The citizens found a personal advantage in being soldiers, and to their victories was owing the plenty of every thing in the city itself; so that it would have been impolitic in the commonwealth to make peace with

* Veii was taken and utterly destroyed in the year of Rome 358, after a siege of ten years.

with one of its neighbours, unless to turn their arms against another. At present, that by a necessary consequence of the governments established among the European potentates, all the riches of a state are lodged in the hands of a few men, whereas the rest subsist only by their industry; when citizens, nobles, magistrates, soldiers, merchants, labourers, and tradesmen form so many different classes with opposite interests; how is it possible to make war equally advantageous to them all? It necessarily becomes the scourge of all nations; without enriching the armies themselves, it impoverishes all the citizens, by ruining industry, and putting a stop to commerce, at the same time that they are obliged to pay greater taxes. The government then, being not only restrained by the murmuring of the people, but also by the difficulty of levying the taxes, at last finds itself unable to go on with its enterprizes; and the people being sore distressed by the calamities of war, are above all things desirous of peace.

After what I have hitherto said of the different causes which concurred to aggrandize the Romans, whoever reflects how much pains, application and trouble, the conquest of Italy alone cost them, will be induced to think the ambition of our modern powers a mere childish affair. People ought to consider, that a nation of soldiers alone is capable of subduing its neighbours; because it alone can be master of that excellent discipline which insures success, that steadiness which maintains an undaunted courage under misfortunes, that insatiable thirst for glory, which is never weary with conquering, and especially those wise regulations, which by prohibiting every thing unnecessary in war, leaves no room for any other passions besides those for liberty and fighting, and naturally supplies the means of making one conquest subservient to the gaining a second. What a picture

does one of our modern nations exhibit ? There we see some rich, indolent, and voluptuous men, whose happiness depends on a multitude of others, who flatter their passions, and procure themselves a subsistence by inventing new pleasures for the rich. This assembly of oppressors and oppressed, forms what is called society ; which having collected the very dregs, and most contemptible part of its members, makes soldiers of them. It was not with such arms, or men of this character, that the Romans conquered the universe.

I am not afraid of committing a mistake, when I affirm, that the ambition of our modern Europeans, instead of paving a people's way to universal monarchy, must hasten their fall. In fact, where is the nation that is not loaded with the debts occasioned by war ? The most indebted are those which have performed the greatest exploits. Some princes indeed have extended their frontiers ; but have they increased their strength by augmenting their territories ? There is no nation in Europe, whose true advantage it is not to cultivate peace with the utmost care. To make war upon any other account than that of its own defence, would be to act contrary to its interest ; and what happiness can a people expect, that does not consult this in all its undertakings ?

Notwithstanding the many advantages, which the commonwealth of Rome had over its enemies, it would never have subdued them, if it had not, by the very form of its government, been obliged to conduct itself by invariable principles and maxims, which were the spring of all its actions, and pushed it towards the object which it had always in view. Let us only cast our eye on the treaties, alliances, and leagues which the nations of Europe have made since the beginning of this century ; and we shall be induced to think, that

none

none of them have any fixed interest, that intrigue has taken the place of politics, that instead of directing affairs, they are directed by them, and that they are friends or enemies by chance.

Among the Romans, the magistrate was obliged to take the sense of the people, and regulate his government by their interest; but at present, just the reverse obtains; the personal interest of those who govern being deemed that of the state. The timorous or moderate man does not see things in the same light with him who is brave and ambitious. Hence it is, that in most states their conduct is weak, intrepid, ambitious, and disinterested by turns, because they are successively subject to masters of different abilities, but especially passions. It very rarely happens that a prince pursues the same course with his predecessor. He even frequently changes his character and policy by changing ministers; so that the nation never proceeds farther than just to begin an enterprize.

The history of our ancestors instructs us before-hand in that of our posterity. According to what has formerly happened, the ballance of power among the European nations will not always continue the same. A state when governed by an able and ambitious prince, will bid fair to carry all before it; and all of a sudden become the jest of its neighbours. To a Charlemain will succeed a Louis Debonaire; the edifice erected by the hero, will crumble to pieces under the weak prince. The one communicated his genius to the nation, saw every thing, and remedied all abuses; the other saw only his court, his favourites and domestics; encumbered by his power, and unable to employ his own strength, he could not withstand an adversary much less powerful than he, but brave, wise, and political. These precarious but ordinary tricks of fortune will contribute

tribute more, if I am not mistaken, than the policy of the ballance of power, to preserve the independency of each nation.

The first wars of the Romans were only incursions, where valour decided every thing. Little skill in their enemies would have been sufficient to conquer them; but as they were equally ignorant with the Romans, they neither opposed them by stratagem, or well fabricated machines. The consuls being always successful, did not even know there were some circumstances, where force was absolutely necessary to secure the victory; and others, where it was only to be obtained by seeming to renounce all pretensions to it. The Romans were always for fighting, and the great opinion they had of their own valour, put them upon beating the enemy by main force: to conquer them without the assistance of the legions, would have been looked upon only as a half victory.

These prejudices, which had their birth with that of the commonwealth, so agreeably flattered the pride of the Romans, as to subsist even long after their generals had carried the science of war to the highest degree of perfection. The address employed by Marcius and Attilius to deceive Perseus, and hinder him from commencing hostilities before the commonwealth had sent their legions into Greece, was condemned at Rome by a part of the senate, that piqued themselves, according to Livy, upon preserving the sentiments of the antient Romans. “ Rome, said these senators, “ scorns to make use of stratagems and indirect means; “ all her actions love broad day-light. She knows “ not what it is to pretend flight, in order to inspire her enemies with a false confidence, that she may “ fall upon and oppress them unawares. Our ancestors

“cestors loved glory, and did not stain their valour
 “by associating it with cunning; for after having
 “declared war, they even appointed the day and place
 “of battle.”

The Caudine disgrace made the consuls more watchful *. From that time they began to act from knowledge, and make war by principles. Their fear of ambuscades and stratagems, taught them to contrive such themselves. Their marches were conducted with more prudence; for after they came to understand that an army might be surrounded, and in a manner besieged in the open fields, they took care to inform themselves of the country before they marched into it. The most difficult point with the Romans was, to accustom themselves to look upon war as an art, where something else besides courage, and a rigid discipline, was necessary. When they began to act with consideration, their progress was rapid.

The Romans always adopted the useful customs they found among their enemies †. Victories, defeats, every thing they turned to advantage; they received some new knowledge relative to war, from every nation they conquered. The Samnites in particular, made them exert every faculty, by which means they acquired so extensive a knowledge in military matters, as put them in condition to repel a prince from Italy, who had
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* A Roman army passed under the yoke at Caudi, or Caudium, a town of the Samnites, called at present Arpaja.

† Neque superbia obstabat quominus instituta aliena, si modo proba erant, imitarentur majores nostri. Arma atque tela militaria ab Samnitibus, insignia magistratuum ab Tuscis pluraque sumpserunt; postremo quod ubique apud socios aut hostes idoneum videbatur, cum summo studio domi exsequebantur, imitari quam invidere bonis malebant. Sallust. in Bell. Catil.

learned the art of war under the generals of Alexander. Pyrrhus found nothing barbarous in the manner of their incamping, and drawing up of an army. With the forces which this prince had brought to the assistance of the Tarentines, and the allies, which an abler politician than he might have made in Italy, it was no doubt in his power to ruin the commonwealth of Rome, though he only taught them to conquer the Carthaginians.

The ambition of this restless and covetous prince, exceeded the rapidity of his arms. Upon his entering Italy, he stops short to conquer Sicily; and hardly had he landed in that island, than he devours Africa, and wishes to subdue Carthage. He knew how to conquer, but his impatience made him take a distaste at his enterprizes before he had accomplished them. The Romans supported themselves against Pyrrhus, by means of the opportunities he himself procured them. Their army had been totally routed near Syris, and worsted at Asculum. A third action would have reduced the Romans, who were not accustomed to fight with elephants, to the defence of their city: but instead of pursuing his advantage, Pyrrhus enters upon an unseasonable negociation; and when he ought to have filled his enemies with terror, he contributes to rouse their courage. Amazed at the relation of Cynneas, who said, the senate of Rome appeared to him like an assembly of kings, and being already tired with the constancy of the Romans, he abandons the Tarentines, their allies, and Italy, to go to the relief of Syracuse and Agrigentum, which were attacked by the Carthaginians. The commonwealth of Rome made the best use of this prince's absence; and returning to succour the Tarentines, whose affairs were in a desperate situation,

tuation, he was beaten at Beneventum, and obliged to retire for shelter into his own kingdom.

It was soon after the retreat of Pyrrhus, that the Romans invented that excellent order of battle, to which Polybius attributes the victories which they continued to gain over their enemies. They drew up in three lines, and each line, instead of forming a heavy body of infantry, whose motions would have been slow and difficult to perform, was composed of separate corps at some distance from each other, by which means the quickest evolutions were rendered easy. The *Principes*, who formed the second line, were placed directly over-against the intervals between the cohorts of the *Hastati* who formed the first; and the cohorts of the *Triarii*, who were placed in the third line, corresponded to the intervals of the *Principes*. These last were the bravest and most experienced soldiers in the army, and formed the body of reserve.

Besides that this disposition was more proper than the phalanx of the Greeks, or the order of the barbarians, to avoid the shock of the elephants, a small movement being sufficient to bring the Roman army into the form of a column, it also opposed a less front to the missile weapons of the *velites*. Thus in the same action, it became necessary in a manner, to defeat the Romans thrice. If the *Hastati* were beaten, the *Principes* advanced to sustain the charge, and give them time to rally behind the lines, in order to attack the enemy a second time; the *Triarii* too disputed the victory with them, if both the first and second lines happened to be put to flight.

The Greeks and successors of Alexander knew only one way of marshalling an army, which was that of the phalanx, composed of sixteen thousand men drawn up sixteen deep. If we attend to what historians have told

told us of the arms of these soldiers, we shall not be surpris'd that Paulus Emilius was in no small concern the first time he engag'd Perseus.

The phalanx appear'd invincible, and it was so in fact, says Polybius, as long as it kept united; but, adds he, as it took up twenty stadiums, it rarely found ground proper to draw up in. A rising ground, a ditch, a bog, an hedge, or a rivulet broke its order; and the enemy could ruin it with so much the greater ease, by penetrating the intervals left open on such an occasion, as the nature of the phalanx, according to the same author, is such, that the soldiers are capable of performing no evolutions, or fighting hand to hand, by reason of the length of their arms.

But though they should have met with no obstacle in their way, it was even impossible but the phalanx must be put in some disorder from every motion. The Roman cohorts were no less proper for performing all manner of evolutions, than the unwieldy battalia of the Greeks was the contrary; so that they had a considerable advantage above the phalanx. To defeat the Greek army, it was sufficient to force them to engage upon uneven ground, to break their order by the help of the velites before the onset began, or oblige them to march.

We may with greater reason apply what Polybius says of the light battalia of the Romans, compar'd with that of the Macedonians, to the order of battle among other people, whose infantry being crowded all in one body, was subject to the inconveniencies of the phalanx, without enjoying its advantages. Two, or even three phalanxes plac'd behind one another, contribute nothing to the strength of an army, as being incapable of succouring each other. Annibal experi-
enced

rienced the truth of this observation at Zama. He composed his first phalanx of the most indifferent troops in his army, hoping to fall upon the Romans with the second phalanx, when they were tired with beating the first, and by that means easily put them to flight. But this great man was disappointed in his expectation; for his first phalanx being broken and routed, threw itself upon the second, put it in disorder, and involved it in its own defeat before even the Romans approached.

BOOK II.

Argument. Of Carthage. Its wars with the Romans. The situation of the several powers after the second Punic war. Their policy. That of the Romans to bring them under subjection. Some particular reflections concerning Antiochus.

WHilst Rome was employed in subduing Italy, Carthage, which had long enjoyed the sovereignty of Africa, extended its conquests beyond the bounds of that continent. She had made considerable acquisitions in Spain. Sardinia was subdued, and Sicily was like to undergo the same fate. By their extensive and flourishing commerce, the Carthaginians were become immensely rich: this inflamed their pride; for being the richest people in the world, they imagined themselves intitled to the empire of it. The Romans, on the contrary, thought that this ought to be the reward of their courage, patience, and love of glory. These two nations, having by a continued se-

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ries of success subjected the states situated between them, at last make war upon each other; and possibly in all history, we shall not find a more interesting, entertaining, and instructive scene of action, than that of the rivalry of these two commonwealths.

Carthage, founded by Dido, several ages before Romulus, was at first subject to kings; but soon shook off their yoke, and erected itself into a free state. Two annual magistrates presided in the numerous senate they had elected, summoned its assemblies, and proposed the subjects of its deliberations. While the senate was unanimous, it regulated and directed every thing, and the government was absolutely aristocratical? But for want of unanimity in that body, the matter in debate was carried before the people, whom their magistrates assembled in the Forum for this purpose*. These decided every thing by a plurality of suffrages; and in this case, the government became purely democratical. Hence by turns, each of the two orders of the state, was in possession of the supreme power; so that Carthage being alternately governed by the senate and people, had no fixed rule of conduct. Aristotle and Polybius, then, being deceived by the form of the Carthaginian government, by two suffetes, a senate, and assemblies of the people, were mistaken when they compared it, the one to the commonwealth of Sparta, and the other to that of Rome, where royalty, aristocracy, and democracy, were so united and blended together, always correcting the defects of each other, as to form a mixed government, that comprehended the advantages of all others.

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* These magistrates of the people were to the number of one hundred and five, and called by Latin writers Centumviri. They were the judges in all civil cases.

As the Carthaginians from their first establishment, were, after the example of the Tyrians their progenitors, wholly guided by a desire of extending their commerce, and amassing immense riches, they must have been subject to the evils, which naturally arise out of avarice †. If the wise government of the Romans was ruined by this means, what destruction must they not make among the Carthaginians, whose laws were neither fit to prevent or remedy abuses? Probity and accomplishments were utterly disregarded. Offices were conferred on the rich citizens alone, who were even permitted to enjoy several of them at once. The want of equality among the magistrates, and the interfering of their respective functions, instead of emulation, gave birth to heart-burnings and jealousies; and from this source sprung those cabals and factions, which were as old as the commonwealth itself, whose true interests were continually sacrificed to them.

It is impossible to conceive, how the Carthaginians came to preserve their liberty to the time they made war upon the Romans, unless on the supposition, that their minds being more intently fixed on their banks and counters, than any other object, not to mention their being counteracted by intrigue, they were not capable of forming such great designs as the Romans. While the one, influenced by that pusillanimity and cowardice, which was natural to them, revenged themselves like citizens, and aspired at command only by secret and indirect means; the others, who were brave

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† The avarice of the Carthaginians was a mean and sordid passion. They could not enjoy their fortunes. M. Huet, in his history of the commerce and navigation of the antients, chap. 15. says, that the Romans, by way of derision, called the Carthaginians porridge eaters.

and daring, like the commonwealth they belonged to, gave loose reins to their ambition, and decided their quarrels by the sword. The very moderation observed by the Carthaginians in the midst of all their vices, gave a very disadvantageous opinion of their character; for that weakness which restrained them from being so wicked as the Romans, only rendered them more contemptible.

Be this as it will, Carthage subdued its neighbours, who without doubt must have been people incapable of defending their liberty. This first success, the contributions they exacted from the enemy, and the spoils of the conquered, inspired them with an high opinion of their own strength, which was only an additional defect in their constitution. The Carthaginians, though wholly addicted to commerce, are resolved to commence conquerors. This must certainly have proved their ruin, if they did not always find people, whose government was equally bad with their own, and who were no less corrupted, weak, and disunited than themselves; for it is impossible, that a commonwealth, like that of Carthage, whose soldiers were all mercenaries, and its magistrates and generals distinct persons, should have the capacity to begin, carry on, and accomplish warlike enterprizes of any consequence*. As she was accustomed to see her interests in another point of view, and with other prejudices, than a warlike nation, she naturally loved peace, as tending to make her commerce flourish; and consequently must be very unfit for carrying on a war with success. Her undertakings
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* The command of armies among the Carthaginians was attached to no magistracy. The senate or people raised to the dignity of general, an officer that had distinguished himself, or had most address to court the public favour.

being always either too great, or too trifling, could never be concerted with prudence, nor put in execution without either distrusting or presuming too much on her strength. She must be confident, or distrustful always out of season, insolent in prosperity, and irresolute under adversity; so that being incapable of waging war to advantage, she must at last be ruined.

If we compare these general reflections, with what I have hitherto said of the political institutions of the Romans, it will no doubt appear surprising, that the first Punic war lasted twenty-one years, and that it did not end in the entire ruin of Carthage. But it ought to be attended to, that the commonwealth of Rome then entered upon a new sphere of action, and on that account could not at first reap all the advantage, which its form of government, manners, and military discipline, gave it over the Carthaginians. The war could no longer be carried on in the manner it had hitherto been done in Italy, by gradually extending the seat of war, and arming only four legions. It was necessary to establish new maxims, and invent rules of political conduct, widely different from what had formerly been followed. Now such a critical juncture as this, almost always proves fatal to a people, because they want the knowledge gained by experience, and are by the force of habit compelled in a manner to imitate, when they ought to invent.

On the other hand, besides that the Carthaginians were accustomed to make war in remote provinces, and with numerous armies, they must have had another considerable advantage over the Romans, by their experience in maritime affairs. I am sensible, that navigation was an art restrained within as narrow limits among the antients, as it is extensive at present; that

all the qualifications necessary in a sailor was to know by certain presages, whether it would be good or bad weather *; to be able to manage the helm with address, and to row by concert; and that sea-fights were decided by the bravery of the soldiers alone. But as the Romans had seen nothing but fishing-boats, they were too wise not to be intimidated by their ignorance. The extraordinary honours granted to the consul Duilius, who first defeated a Carthaginian fleet, prove how unexpected that victory was.

After this first success, the Romans continued to make farther attempts, but had need of several repeated victories to inspire them with the same confidence on sea as they had on land. Besides, the empire of the Carthaginians being supported by its own weight against slight attacks, could not be ruined, but by enterprizes of moment; and the poverty of the commonwealth of Rome was an insurmountable obstacle to their forming any such. The use of money had not been many years known at Rome †, the generosity of the citizens, however great, could not but fall far short of the ordinary funds appointed for the support of the war, by so rich a state as Carthage.

These were the particular causes, which, in the course of the first Punic war, rendered the Romans inferior in some sort to themselves. Though they ought to have judged of the weakness of Carthage, by the severity with which it treated its subjects; though they were not ignorant of the famous diversion made by Agathocles,

* See Vegetius, l. 5. ch. 10, 11, and 13.

† It was only in the year 481, that the commonwealth first used some silver money; and the first Punic war began in the year 489.

cles *, when instead of making war upon them in distant provinces, the blow was directed against the city itself; I say, notwithstanding all this, it was long before the Romans resolved to send an army into Africa. At length the battle of Ecnome having enabled Regulus to lay siege to Carthage, this general might have then executed, what the Scipios did afterwards; but his countrymen, being diffident of their own strength and knowledge, and finding themselves embarrassed by the greatness of the attempt, gave orders for one consul, with a part of the legions, to return into Italy.

After the defeat of Regulus, the Romans made preparations, as if they designed to take signal vengeance on the enemy; they equipped a fleet of three hundred vessels, but instead of carrying the war a second time into Africa, where they would have no more found a Xantippus †, they contented themselves with fetching off from Aspis the soldiers of Regulus that had taken refuge there.

However, after the commonwealth of Rome had learned experience by its very faults; after a war of twenty-one years, had not only taught it to fight with

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* Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, being greatly distressed by the Carthaginians that had besieged his city, embarked with the best part of his army, and made a descent upon Africa. He even advanced to Carthage itself, threatening to lay siege to it, and by this seasonable diversion obliged them to recall their troops from Sicily.

† Xantippus, the Lacedæmonian, who had come to the relief of Carthage, being honoured with the command of the army, obtained a compleat victory over Regulus. The Carthaginians had the baseness to put this great man to death, that they might free themselves from the obligation of being grateful to him.

equal art by sea as land, but also made great enterprizes familiar; and after it was enriched by the possession of Sicily, and other countries yielded up by the peace; in circumstances, should Carthage renew the war, its ruin seemed inevitable, or at least, it could expect no success of consequence: But states do not always act agreeably to the dictates of reason. Fortune sometimes takes a pleasure in confounding the wisdom of men, to let them see that they are never sufficiently wise. Rome, though designed to be mistress of the world, wanted little of being subdued by the Carthaginians: this makes one of the irregular phenomena recorded in history, the cause of which cannot be too much studied by politicians.

The application of Amilcar, Asdrubal, and Annibal, one after another, to form the armies to the strictest discipline, had supplied what was wanting in the government of Carthage, in order to have soldiers equally brave with those of the Romans. These singularly excellent men, who owed every thing to their own ability, and nothing to the institutions of their country, had the address to inspire an army of mercenary soldiers, made up of different nations, with the same zeal, the same fidelity, and the same submission to command, as the consuls naturally found in their fellow citizens. While Rome, which had shut the temple of Janus after the first Punic war, enjoyed its ease, and too freely indulged itself in all the sweets of a peace*, that suffered little interruption from a few expeditions against states who were too easily brought

* The interval between the first and second Punic war was twenty-five years. The one ended in the year of Rome 510, and the other began in 535.

brought to reason †, the armies of Carthage learned fresh experience in Spain, where they daily made new conquests. Notwithstanding the intrigues and cabals that set the Carthaginians at variance among themselves, and which have this peculiarity, to make merit be overlooked, and even to dread and suppress it, in order to substitute ignorance and incapacity in its place, they gave the command of the army to Annibal. The Romans, on the contrary, (such is the caprice of fortune!) notwithstanding that their government was of all others the best calculated to produce great men, and which never failed to reward merit, raised a Flaminius and Varro to the consulship.

It was not, properly speaking, against the commonwealth of Carthage, that Rome was going to make war, but only against Annibal; who being supported by a well disciplined army, and what monies he had been able to raise in Spain, meditates, projects, and executes every thing by himself, without receiving any assistance from his country. If the senate of Carthage had regulated the operations of this war, the Romans might have committed blunders with impunity; but

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† Neque hostem acriorem bellicosioremq; secum congressum, nec rem Romanam tam desidem unquam fuisse atque imbellem. Sardos, Corsosque, et Istros atque Illyrios, laceffisse magis quem exercuisse Romana arma; et cum Gallis tumultuatum verius quam belligeratum. Pœnum hostem, veteranum trium et viginti annorum, militiâ durissimâ inter Hispanas gentes semper victorem, primum Amilcare, deinde Asdrubale, nunc Annibale duce acerrimo assuetum, recentem ab excidio opulentissimæ urbis Iberum transire: trahere secum tot exercitos Hispanorum populos: concitutum avidas semper armorum Gallicas gentes; cum orbe terrarum bellum gerendum in Italia, ac pro mœnibus Romanis esse. Tit. Liv. l. 21.

a man, who was himself capable of committing none; is not only quicksighted to observe them in others, but uses address to ensnare the enemy, and makes them pay dear for the least oversight, and the smallest degree of inattention.

Rome had done the Carthaginians too much mischief in the first Punic war, and even given them too great cause of being offended since that time, by seizing on the island of Sardinia, contrary to the faith of treaties, not to be uneasy at their progress in Spain. To see their enemy recover themselves from the low state to which they had been reduced, and yet forbear to make war on them, was imprudence in the highest degree. The Romans therefore ought to have opposed Annibal's first attempts; but after that this general had by threatening the Saguntines, discovered what his real intentions were, the commonwealth of Rome should have deliberated no longer, the war was declared against them. It had only one course to take, which was speedily to transport its legions into Spain: for all its strength, as I have already observed, consisted in an intimate union with its allies.

To allow therefore one of them to be oppressed, deprived all the rest of the confident assurance, that they had nothing to fear under its protection; and consequently sapped the foundations of their empire. Besides, it is always the interest of a state to have the theatre of war in the most remote provinces from the seat of its empire. If its arms are successful, some new acquisitions are gained; or should the contrary happen, its losses are never attended with ruin, as many courses remain to be taken for the re-establishment of its affairs. Is there any one so blind as not to perceive, that though Annibal had had the same success in Spain, as he had in Italy; for though he had reduced

duced the Romans to the greatest distress there, yet would the alarm occasioned by this means, have been no ways comparable to that in the other case?

The irresolution and slowness of the Romans, was what made Annibal entertain thoughts of passing from Spain into Italy. This enterprize has frequently been charged with rashness, it being the fate of great men to appear more daring than prudent, because people judge of their actions without having their knowledge or resources. Be this as it will, never was there an undertaking formed with greater wisdom. Annibal was well apprized of the superiority which Rome had over his own country; he knew that all the hopes which Carthage had of success, depended entirely on his capacity, and some favourable circumstances which might never occur again: this being the case, it would have been absurd to form a plan that he himself could not have executed. If he had attempted to drive the Romans by little and little out of their conquests, and ruin them by a long series of success, he run no small risk of losing his soldiers, and dying himself before this could be accomplished; by which means his country would have been left to support itself, a load much too heavy for its strength. On the contrary, by carrying the war into Italy, he in one campaign reduced a victorious state to defend their own territories; and what is more, one or two successful actions, put him in condition to lay siege to Rome, to take and burn it, and to sell its citizens for slaves.

But what more especially determined Annibal to take this course, was the consideration, that, by fixing the seat of war in some remote province, he would not only have the Roman legions to engage with, but also those auxiliary forces, which were continually supplied by the Italians, by whose assistance nothing
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could withstand the Romans. By passing into Italy, he flattered himself, and not without reason, to dispel that kind of charm which kept the people there slaves to the Romans, and even to arm them against their masters, by which means the rival of Carthage would have been reduced to its primitive low condition. In short, if any of the states of Italy had still preserved so much of the memory of their antient liberty, as to look with a jealous eye upon the commonwealth of Rome; if they were no longer the dupes of that artful piece of Roman policy, whereby one state was made use of to enslave another, must not they have received the Carthaginians as deliverers, and under their protection, endeavoured to recover their liberty? What might not so great a politician as Annibal promise himself, by working upon the Italians, sometimes by the fear of punishments, and sometimes by the hopes of rewards?

Even the Roman colonies would not have continued faithful to their metropolis, if the Corthaginians, after gaining some considerable advantage, had turned their arms against them, threatening them with destruction, if they did not join in their alliance. The Roman citizens, who had been transported into a new colony, after some distance of time, no doubt regarded the place of their birth as their true country. There was their family, their gods, their friends, their fortune, and every thing that is capable of affecting the human heart. Was it natural then for these colonies to retain so much respect for the city to which they owed their origin, as to sacrifice their wives, their children, their liberty, their temples, their houses and sepulchres, to the safety of the capital?

However wise Annibal's plan was, all the accomplishments of the greatest politician and general were
necessary

necessary to its execution. How many new difficulties must he not continually meet with, in a march of three hundred leagues, through countries unknown to him, divided by deep and rapid rivers, full of difficult passes, and where his constant employment must be either to conquer the barbarous nations by force, or deceive them by stratagem? All these he previously removes, by foreseeing them; and whilst he undertakes and carries his design into execution with success, the commonwealth of Rome continues always blind to its true interest, and acts without courage or prudence.

It should seem, that the Romans never penetrated the intentions of their enemy, for instead of providing for the defence of Italy, by securing the passes into it, which, after their delays and want of resolution, was the only course they had to take, they set on foot fruitless negotiations. As they had forgot, that the best way of demanding satisfaction, and treating of peace, is by making preparations for war; their ambassadors, whom they sent to Carthage, into Spain, and Gaul, received nothing but insulting answers, or biting raillery, still more humbling to their pride.

I dare not take upon me to affirm, that the sure way to conquer Annibal, after his entering Italy, was by deferring to give him battle. It is true indeed, that he found himself in the heart of a country full of the Roman name, where none dared to attempt any thing in his favour; he was without allies, without provisions, and without engines of war; and certain it is, that every general but himself must have been ruined, if he did not speedily gain a battle. But as Annibal certainly foresaw, that the Romans might keep themselves on the defensive, it cannot be questioned, but he had formed

a plan of operations in consequence of this, which, it is probable, would have been attended with success.

Be this as it will, it cannot be denied, that the wisest course the Romans could take, was to avoid fighting him, and, without exposing themselves in the least, to hem in the Carthaginians. All the world knows, to what extremities Fabius reduced them by such a conduct, though their victories had by that time shaken the fidelity of the Italian states, some of whom had even admitted them into their cities. But the more the Romans were provoked to see Annibal at their gates, the more they were ashamed of the impolitic conduct that had occasioned the loss of Saguntum; and the more they upbraided themselves with remissness and negligence, the more natural it was for them to follow the dictates of their pride, and allow themselves to be hurried away by the impetuosity of their courage. Besides, the commonwealth of Rome had no idea of a defensive war, as having never been engaged in one.

Whether it was owing to the weakness of the enemies, with whom they had hitherto engaged; or, that the consuls, whose office was annual, had always been forward to terminate the war, or at least to gain such advantages as might procure them the honour of a triumph; the Roman armies were accustomed to go in quest of the enemy, and never thought they had made a good campaign, if they had not cut them in pieces. The success with which this method of making war had always been attended, made the Romans conclude that it was the wisest; and to this false notion were owing the advantages, which Annibal gained on the banks of the Tesis and Trebia, and near the lake Thrasimene.

Cornelius Scipio and Flaminius would have thought themselves dishonoured, if they had not seized the first opportunity to engage. The one was brave, but inconsiderate;

fiderate; who, by relying too much on the valour and discipline of his soldiers, was not sufficiently attentive to discharge the duties of a general. The other was wholly inspired by a haughty fool-hardiness, that made him condemn all manner of precautions. The consequence was, that both were conquered.

In this dangerous situation of affairs, Fabius, being made dictator, resolved at length to accustom the Romans to act on the defensive, and to destroy his enemy by avoiding an engagement. But Annibal, who was sensible of his superiority over the Roman generals in a day of battle, found it necessary to conquer once more, in order finally to determine the Italian states in his favour, that were already alarmed, and uncertain what the fate of the war would be. This made him act the politician instead of the warrior, in regard to a general, who always marched with his army from the top of one mountain to that of another, and had the address to intrench himself in none but inaccessible camps. Sometimes he endeavours to render him suspected by his fellow citizens, by sparing his and the estates of the nobility, and pillaging those of the Plebeians. Sometimes his aim is to make him contemptible, by pretending to brave him, at the same time that he feigns to be afraid of Minutius, master of the horse, whom he even allows to gain some advantages. The Romans gave into the snare Annibal had laid for them; being so provoked at the circumspection of Fabius, that they gave Minutius an equal power with that of the dictator.

Nothing could be more imprudent than such a conduct, as by this means the forces of the commonwealth were divided, at a time when they could not be too much united. Fabius and Minutius shared the legions between them, and instead of one formidable army the Romans had two, which separately were far from being

a match for the Carthaginians. Annibal was all attention to turn this misunderstanding to his advantage, and had every thing in readiness to surround and cut Minutius to pieces. Happily for the Romans, the love of their country was their predominant virtue. The dictator was more sensibly affected by the loss which the commonwealth was in danger of suffering, than by the fatal but too natural pleasure of seeing a rival fall, whom they had been so unjust as to prefer to him. He flies to his assistance, rescues, and obliges him to testify so much gratitude, as to return to his just degree of subordination.

Annibal, who was always acquainted with the characters of the generals opposed to him, and present, if I may use the expression, in their councils *, had no occasion for such political conduct, when the consuls P. Emilius and T. Varro took upon them the command of the army. The first had always approved Fabius, and being strongly attached to his maxims, was capable of resisting the murmuring of the soldiers, and the complaints of the citizens shut up in Rome. Persuaded, that posterity would do him justice for the calumnies of his contemporaries, or rather content to do his duty, and enjoy the pleasure resulting from the consciousness of his own virtue, he had the courage to serve his country faithfully against its will.

Varro, on the contrary, being the most presumptuous man in the world, and consequently without capacity, was wholly guided by that enthusiastic confidence, with which a general ought to inspire his soldiers, but should be cautious of suffering it to influence his own conduct, if he would secure success, or provide suitable remedies in case

* Nec quicquam eorum, quæ apud hostes agebantur, eum fallebat: omnia ei hostium haud secus quam sua notabant. Tit. Liv. l. 22.

case of a misfortune. Commanded by two generals of so opposite characters, that succeeded each other alternately with equal authority, and all whose dispositions regarded different objects, it was impossible that the Roman army should either continue on the defensive, or attack with advantage. The consequence was, that Varro received a compleat overthrow at the famous battle of Cannæ.

Never did a victory appear more decisive. All the antients are of opinion, that it was impossible for Rome ever to have recovered the loss it there sustained, if Annibal had immediately marched thither, and laid siege to it; and it is probable, that Maharbal's speech, so well known, contributed to fix their judgment. "The fortune of war, said this officer to his general, hath opened you a way into the capitol. In five days we may sup there, were it your pleasure, that, at the head of my cavalry, I should go before and inform the Romans of your approach to besiege them in their own city; but the gods have not endowed one man with every accomplishment; you know how to conquer, but not to improve your victory *." In short, many historians are persuaded, that such was the consternation of the Romans,

* Maharbal, præfectus equitum, minime cessandum ratus, imo, ut quid hac pugna sit actum scias; die quinto, inquit, victor in capitolio epulaberis: sequere, cum equite, ut prius venisse, quam venturum sciant, præcedam. Annibali nimis læta res est visa, majorque, quam ut eam statim animo capere posset. Itaque voluntatem se laudare Maharbalis ait; ad consilium pensandum, temporis opus esse. Tum Maharbal: non omnia nimirum eidem Dii dedere; vincere scis, Annibal, victoria uti nescis. Mora ejus diei satis creditur salutis fuisse urbi atque imperio. Tit. Liv. l. 22.

mans, as would have prevented their making any defence.

If Annibal himself did not afterwards deny, that he had committed a fault in not marching to Rome †, it was not that he imagined, he was able to make himself master of it five days thereafter; he knew the courage of his enemies too well to entertain such a thought. According to the writers, who have endeavoured to justify him, had he led his army immediately from the field of Cannæ to the walls of Rome, he was sure not to meet with the same success, as the Gauls did after the battle of Allia ‡. The successive defeats the Romans had received, were by no means the effects of a corruption introduced either into their government or manners, but of the superiority of Annibal over their generals, and the impetuosity of an excessive courage, that hindered them from discerning their real situation, or conducting themselves agreeably to their true interest.

So far were their misfortunes from overwhelming or stupifying the Romans, that they on the contrary gave new force to their government, by changing their fear into despair. The senate, by congratulating Varro for not despairing of the preservation of the commonwealth, shewed that they had not lost all hopes. In short,

† *Audita vox Annibalis fertur, potiundæ sibi urbis Romæ modo mentem non dari modo fortunam. Tit. Liv. l. 26. Ferunt Annibalem respexisse sæpe Italiæ littor, Deos homines accusantem in se quoque ac suum ipsius caput execratum, quod non cruentum ab Cannensi victoria militem Romam duxisset. Id. l. 30.*

‡ On receiving the news of this defeat, the terror of the Romans was so great, that they abandoned their city. The Gauls entered it without meeting the least resistance; and all the hopes of the Romans were reduced to the defence of the capitol alone.

short, Rome was a strong place, the siege whereof it would have been hard for the Carthaginian army to form. It was by no means empty of inhabitants, nor consequently of soldiers. Besides, as Annibal was unprovided of all manner of machines necessary for a siege, he had miscarried even before a place of small importance after the battle of Thrasimene.

However, I cannot but blame this general, for not having discovered the prudence of Maharbal's counsel, through the exaggeration of the expressions he made use of. Unquestionably the siege of Rome would have proved long and difficult; but so daring an enterprize would infallibly have drawn over all the Italians to the alliance of Carthage. These states being no less amazed at the defensive part, to which the commonwealth of Rome was now reduced, than at the overthrow it had received in battle, thought every thing possible for Annibal to effect. Whether moved by fear and ill-will, the hope of recovering their former liberty, or the desire of making sure of the protection of the conqueror, they would all have been forward to join his camp, pay him homage, and make offer of the succours he stood in need of to crown his enterprize with success.

In such a general revolt of Italy, it would no longer have been in the power of the Romans to get the better of their misfortunes, to astonish their enemies by their resolute steadiness, to inspire their allies with the same confidence, nor, in one word, to work out their deliverance by that enterprising spirit, which at once embarrassed Sicily, Sardinia, Spain, the sea, Africa and Macedonia, and that, at a time, when the utmost efforts were made to deprive them of Italy itself. What did it signify to the Romans to bear up against their ill fortune, and to prove successful in distant provinces,

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if their city was besieged by an army, always victorious; if it was utterly destroyed, and its inhabitants put to the sword, or sold for slaves?

Whatever intrepidity the defence of Rome might have inspired its citizens with, they could not have proved more brave than the Saguntines, who, not able to survive their country, buried themselves in its ruins, leaving nothing to the conqueror, but an heap of ashes and rubbish. Besides, as the number of the inhabitants of Rome was very great, there was reason to dread a famine; nor had they less cause to fear a surprise, and the stratagems and power of the enemy. A city besieged by so able a general as Annibal, and at the same time deprived of all succours, must necessarily be undone. The Romans, therefore, in order to save themselves from ruin, would have been obliged to recall their forces into Italy, instead of recruiting their armies in Spain and Sicily, of equipping fleets, and attempting to punish Maceonia for its alliance with the Carthaginians.

Nevertheless, I dare venture to say, that this conduct, though the wisest, or rather the only reasonable course the commonwealth of Rome could take, would have only retarded its fall. Without all doubt it was his reflecting upon the necessary consequences of the siege of Rome, just hinted at, that made Annibal repent of his not marching thither, immediately after the battle of Cannæ. The preservation of the Roman state would then have depended upon one or two engagements. If the Carthaginians had gained them, Rome was absolutely undone; and in the then situation of affairs, it is certain, that every thing appeared more favourable to the Carthaginians than Romans.

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These last, it is true, would have had the advantage of having their valour roused by the powerful consideration of their own preservation, of their domestic concerns, of their country, of their gods, of their wives and children, for all whom they would have fought. But as to their armies recalled from the provinces, they would have found themselves in some sort strangers, even in the middle of Italy; so that Annibal, who was master of the principal cities, by deferring to fight in his turn, would have done them more mischief, than Fabius had done him by the like conduct. If we suppose, that they came to blows, the Carthaginians, whose infantry was armed after the manner of the Romans, and subject to the strictest discipline, and their Numidian cavalry invincible, would have besides entered the fight with the confidence acquired by four successful battles, and the hope of completing the destruction of Rome, by one bold stroke. These motives, though in themselves less powerful than those of the Romans, would have been amply supplied by Annibal's superiority over the Roman generals.

Scipio, Marcellus, and the other great men, who afterwards distinguished themselves in this war, were not then come to bear any office in the government, or at least, long experience had not enabled them to display all their talents. Fabius himself, to whom the Romans owed so much, would then have served them ill. The so much boasted prudence of this general was rather the effect of an over cautious and timorous disposition, than of a superior genius, which occasionally assuming different forms, knows how to accommodate itself to the circumstances of the commonwealth. To establish the reputation of Fabius, it was necessary an Annibal should be in the heart of Italy.

He was more affected by the fatal consequences of a defeat, than the advantages accompanying a victory, and consequently could be only a politician and warrior of ordinary ability ; but happily for him, he chanced to fall in such circumstances, where want of resolution, of itself blameable, proved of service to the state, and so became a virtue.

As there would have been no longer room for deferring to engage, but by bold, daring, frequent, and repeated attacks, to oblige the Carthaginians to raise the siege of Rome ; it is very probable that Fabius would have forwarded the ruin of his country. At a time, when the commonwealth of Rome might very well have acted offensively, this general continued still to regulate his conduct by his former maxims. Livy represents him as always encamped on eminences, always ready to retreat on the approach of the enemy, and quartered beyond the Vultur, being extremely careful to consult the soothsayers, augurs, the sacred birds, and the entrails of victims, and to offer as many expiatory sacrifices, as there were childish and ridiculous stories told him.

Plutarch even informs us, that being ready to fall into one of the ambushes Annibal had laid for him, he owed his own and the army's preservation to the Aruspices, who seasonably foretold, that his enterprize would be of fatal consequence. Let circumstances change as they would, he always viewed them in the same light. He constantly opposed the prudent diversion which the Romans made in Africa, that compelled Annibal to leave Italy. As he was accustomed to dread every thing, he would never have ventured an engagement at Zama ; and, though in direct opposition to the maxims of that well grounded prudence, which hindered Scipio from giving ear to the pro-

propofals for peace made by his enemy, he would have concluded a treaty, thereby expofing the Romans to a third war with Carthage, poffibly no lefs dangerous than the fecond, or at leaft equally fo with the firft.

By how much the fiege of Rome, immediately after the battle of Cannæ, would have been advantageous to the Carthaginians, of fo much prejudice was Annibal's inactivity to them. From that time, there happened a chain of unlucky circumftances and events, which put a flop to the courfe of this great man's fuccels. I know not, if I fhould mention here the celebrated pleafures of Capua, which no doubt made an alteration in the ftrict difcipline of the Carthaginian army. This circumftance, however, deferves little attention, as there were fo many other caufes that contributed more effectually to raife the hopes and fortune of the Romans!

While Annibal is quartered at Capua, the commonwealth of Rome, which had been accuftomed to fuffer no loffes to go unrevenge, exerted itfelf with fo much the more vigour, as it had been reduced to fo humble a condition, and it found forces within itfelf, that would never have been thought of in lefs preffing dangers. Every citizen was willing to facrifice himfelf to the public good; every foldier is a hero; the flave, on whom the honour of being a free citizen is conferred, is worthy of that honour, chufing either to conquer or die for his new country. Rome being now univerfally infpired with the fame fpirit of revenge, is no longer guilty of the overfights, that had contributed to the firft fuccels of Annibal. Its prudence is equal to its courage. It is not only in condition to keep a confiderable army in Italy, but its policy increafes with its confidence. It equips nu-

merous fleets, recruits the armies in foreign countries, and seems in its turn to threaten Carthage with destruction.

From this rough draught of the great things executed by the Romans, which appear in some sort incredible, it is easy to perceive, that Annibal no longer preserved that superiority of knowledge, policy, and genius, which he had hitherto had over them. These qualities are now equally shared between the Romans and its enemy, though their resources are by no means so. Let it only be attended to, that an army is weakened even by prosperity, and if the conqueror does not always repair the losses sustained by a victory, it is soon out of his power to pursue the advantages acquired by that means. Annibal, who had reduced the Romans to arm their very slaves, wants himself to recruit his army. He dares not, however, have recourse to the Italians, because these people, being astonished at the bravery of the commonwealth of Rome, began to be afraid they had too soon betrayed their trust, and already entertained thoughts of meriting their pardon. So far from arming them, the Carthaginian general, in order to make sure of their fidelity, is obliged to place garisons in their principal cities. The consequence of which is, that being daily weakened, he is no longer in condition to keep the field with the same advantage as formerly.

If Annibal filled his army with Spaniards, Gauls, barbarians, and volunteers without distinction; they were only undisciplined men, that fought at random, whom it was necessary to treat with much lenity, by which means he was no longer master of executing what he could have easily performed with the soldiers he brought from Spain. If he is obliged to demand recruits and subsistence from Carthage, he becomes as much depen-

dependant upon that commonwealth, as he had been before the battle of Cannæ, and as he would have continued to be, if he had formed the siege of Rome. Sometimes the succours would have been denied, sometimes they would have arrived too late, and would always have been insufficient. Annibal from this moment becomes the general of a degenerate commonwealth; he has his hands tied down by its corruptions; and he must necessarily be conquered by the Romans, as having to fight no less against Carthage than them.

Let us only attend to the behaviour of the Carthaginians, when Annibal informed them of his necessities. While Mago, and the heads of the Barcine faction, animate the people to make an effort, Hanno and his followers oppose it. “Do not, would these last say, give yourselves up to an immoderate joy; they deceive you. It is only imaginary triumphs, that Mago with so much ostentation promises you. If we are to believe him, Annibal has cut the Roman armies in pieces; why, therefore, ask more soldiers of us? He has twice taken and plundered the Roman camp, he is loaded with booty; why therefore should we send him money and provisions? Let us hear no more of the advantages gained at Trebia, Thrasimene, and Cannæ, since our affairs are no farther advanced now, than they were when Annibal entered Italy. The Romans do not desire peace, and consequently are not so much humbled as they would persuade us. We have only one wise course to take, and that is, to make peace with them, since the war proves detrimental to us, notwithstanding the advantages we have gained. Let us not exhaust ourselves merely to satisfy Annibal’s pride. New supplies would be of no service to this redoubtable conqueror, who has performed such

“ great exploits ; and he does not deserve them, if he
“ deceives us by false accounts of his success.”

Thus it was they imposed upon the ignorant people of Carthage, who judged of the advantage and success of a war by that of their trade. All the citizens, who opposed the Barcine faction, wished that Annibal might be overcome, and did their utmost to cause him to miscarry ; so much were they afraid that he would make use of the influence acquired by his victories, to ruin their credit.

Annibal, who was surrounded by allies that betrayed him, deprived of succours from his country, and at the head of an army wearied of a war, wherein no more booty was to be got, and whose cavalry, at first so dreadful to the Romans, continually deserted to them, to no purpose outdoes himself. Though the Roman generals are not yet able to conquer him, it is easy however to see, that he must soon lose the possession of Italy. He feels the ill consequences of all the losses sustained by his country in Spain, Sicily, and other places.

As to the Romans, it is apparent, that they must daily gain new advantages in the provinces, because they had only to deal with Carthage, which sends none but undisciplined men against them, that are unprovided of every thing, and where generals are incapable of repairing their blunders, by supplying themselves with whatever is necessary. These advantages at length decided Annibal's fate ; for the commonwealth of Rome having, from what had happened in the first Punic war, learned how weak the Carthaginians were in Africa *, did not fail to carry their arms thither,

* They exercised a very tyrannical power over their subjects, from whom they drew very considerable contributions.

thither, when the reduction of the provinces permitted them to draw a sufficient force together. In short, Scipio enters it, and it is known to every body, that, by the defeat of Asdrubal and Syphax, the Carthaginians experienced in their turn a battle of Cannæ, which made Annibal be recalled to the relief of his country. This fills him with the utmost indignation, as being obliged to abandon Italy, not by the arms of Rome, but the avarice, cowardice, factions, cabals, and divisions of Carthage.

Scipio defeated Annibal at Zama, and this celebrated battle, not only put an end to the grandeur of the Carthaginians ||; but it might be said, that all nations were there conquered, so easy did the conquest of the whole world thereby become to the Romans. The commonwealth of Rome, having gained the alliance of all the countries subject to the Carthaginians, and made itself master of all their riches, formed an enormous power, whose weight could not but crush every thing. Hitherto it had carried on all its wars with much expence and trouble, but from this period, all its enterprizes must prove inferior to its strength.

The states composed of the members of the Macedonian empire, were the principal objects of the ambition of Rome; yet none of them were in condition to make itself respected. Greece was no more what it had formerly been under the conduct of a Militades, a Themistocles, a Pau-

tions. Hence the cities subject to the Carthaginians were always ready to revolt.

|| They obliged themselves to pay the Romans ten thousand talents in the space of fifty years, an immense sum! They also gave up their shipping, and renounced the privilege of making war, by agreeing never to take up arms, but by the permission of the commonwealth of Rome.

Pausanias, and the rest of its great men †. And supposing it had been still possessed of the armies, that fought at Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Plateæ, it would no longer have had a Xerxes or a Mardonius to engage with; besides, that its forces put all together, were too much inferior to those of the Romans, to be the bulwark of Asia against them, as it had been of Europe against the Persians.

Macedonia, after the death of Alexander, had almost sunk again into the weak condition, whence Philip's policy had raised it. The remembrance of its antient grandeur inspired it with ambition. It always flattered itself with the hopes of re-conquering Asia by the assistance of the Greeks; but instead of keeping these in subjection, it only harrassed, or tyrannized over them.

The kings of Syria, who were in possession of the greatest part of Alexander's conquests, might have defended themselves against the Romans, had they known their own strength, and how to use it. But this vast empire resembled those unwieldy giants, who are weaker than other men, because the heart is unable to give that force to the blood and spirits, which is sufficient to convey them to the extremities, in order to preserve life and vigour there.

Among the successors of Alexander, were to be found all the vices, that had made the conquest of those of Cyrus so easy. Asia was destitute of soldiers, as being the constant slave of indolence, luxury, and effeminacy.

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† I pass over slightly the situation of Greece, at the end of the second Punic war, as I could only repeat here, what I have explained at large in my observations on the Greeks. There too may be seen, what relates to the interests of Alexander's successors, with respect to each other.

The Greeks settled there, had lost their courage; and the rest were the slaves of the most intolerable tyranny, being deprived of every sentiment of fear, hope, and emulation.

Egypt, a member likewise of the Macedonian empire, was in no less deplorable situation. Never were princes less worthy of reigning than those of this country. So far were they from entertaining the very thought of resisting the Roman arms, that they purchased by the most servile complaisance, the privilege of living in the most infamous effeminacy, and oppressing their subjects, who, notwithstanding their natural cowardice, were always ready to revolt. The better to judge of the weakness of their government, it is sufficient to take notice of the superiority assumed by the kings of Syria over them; so that influenced by this habit of cringing and compliance, they became the subjects of the Romans, even before they were conquered by arms like Philip, or by favours like Massinissa.

However rare it be to see a state change its politics, when its interest changes, it is not improbable, that the power of the Romans would have given sufficient cause of jealousy to Greece, Macedonia, and the courts of Syria and Egypt, to make them sacrifice their antient animosities to their common safety, by joining in a strict union, if their fears had not been removed by the policy of the Romans, that being no less wise, than full of moderation, had already deceived and subjected the Italians.

As the Greeks, and Alexander's successors, knew only one way of aggrandizing themselves, and of making conquests, which was by entirely subjecting the conquered; and as they observed, that the Romans acquired only allies by their conquests, and neither placed garrison or prætor in the cities they had reduced, they
imagined

imagined they were without ambition ; so that instead of defending themselves against them, they were persuaded, that if they gave them no offence, there was no occasion to dread them. This security leaving room for their divisions still to subsist, the Romans laid hold of the opportunity to subdue them all one after another, and that by means of each other.

It is necessary, however, to remark, that the prosperity of the Roman commonwealth had near made them renounce that moderation, to which they owed their greatness, and alone could confirm their empire. Since the time they had carried their arms out of Italy, less regard was paid to these maxims ; for we may see in Polybius, how the Romans, 'till then so religious observers of the rules of equity, seized on the island of Sardinia, a little after the first Punic war, and that only because the Carthaginians were not in a condition to defend themselves against strangers, being taken up in reducing their own armies that had revolted. A kind of presumption, which always attends upon long prosperity, began to make the Romans believe, that it was not necessary for them to observe the same cautious policy as their ancestors had done, and that it was time to take the advantage of all the rights of war, by making subjects of them they conquered.

In order to satisfy their revenge, and the pride with which Annibal's defeat had inspired them, it would have been necessary to raze the city of Carthage, and establish a direct property to Africa. Beyond all question, the new passions of the Romans would have made them attempt this destructive enterprize, if the personal interest of the general, who commanded their army in Africa, had not opposed it. Scipio was sensible, that nothing is more difficult than to complete the ruin of a
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nation *. However low it may be reduced, it finds within itself, when in immediate danger of destruction, resources which it never thought of before. The conqueror of Annibal ought by no means to hazard the sully of his glory. Besides, he was afraid, that the people would tire of prolonging his authority; and he himself afterwards confessed, that the Carthaginians owed the preservation of their city to the efforts of the consuls T. Claudius, and Cn. Cornelius, to deprive him of the command of the army, and the glory of terminating the war †.

The same motives which kept Scipio from destroying the conquered Carthaginians, afterwards determined other generals to follow his example. Flaminius refused to comply with the desires of Greece, that wanted him to treat Macedonia with the utmost rigour. He allowed Philip and his kingdom still to subsist; and the Romans, whose avarice was thus repressed, not only con-

* *Sicut regum magistratam difficilius ab summo fastigio ad medium detrahi, quam a mediis ad ima præcipitari.* Tit. Liv. l. 37. If Scipio Africanus really spoke in this manner to the ambassadors of Antiochus, he certainly meant it only as a sophism. This great man knew very well, that the despair of a people, whose extirpation is resolved on, comprehends all that is most sublime in virtue. Let us only reflect on the unhappy situation of the Carthaginians, during the third Punic war, and the heroic and amazing actions they then performed, in order to ward off the ruin which threatened them, and we shall be able to judge how difficult a matter it would have been to extirpate them, at a time when they had Annibal still among them.

† *Sæpe postea ferunt Scipionem dixisse, Tit. Claudii primum cupiditatem, deinde Cn. Cornelii fuisse in mora, quo minus id bellum exitio Carthaginis finiret.* Tit. Liv. l. 30.

continued to use their victories in remote provinces, in the same manner as they had done in Italy, but even gave new proofs of their moderation. If they found themselves obliged to weaken their enemies much, that they might have nothing to fear from them, this severity did not render them odious, because they never did all the evil they were capable of doing, and besides left the conquered their customs, laws, magistrates and government: add to this, that they seemed to make war only for the advantage of their allies.

In short, the commonwealth acquired a habit of retaining nothing of its conquests; which were divided among those who had assisted in obtaining them: this new policy too was owing to the personal interest of the Roman generals. As they were wholly intent upon what might secure the success of their enterprizes, hardly was a war begun against any state, before they courted the alliance of all its neighbours, in order to reduce it to the necessity of defending itself by its own forces alone, while theirs were increased. To bring this about, they offered them, as a reward of their friendship and succours, the provinces that should be conquered.

A people, whose conduct is regulated by maxims, in appearance so contrary to ambition, will soon find all avaricious, pusillanimous, and even ambitious princes court their friendship with great eagerness, in order to have a share in their favours. Hardly had the commonwealth declared war against any nation, before it had all the neighbours of its enemy for allies. This method of enriching the allies, at the expence of the conquered, multiplied the jealousies which divided different states, and was the source of irreconcilable animosities between them. In strict justice we ought only to hate those who

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rob us; but such is our weakness, that we likewise hate those who raise themselves upon our ruins. This iniquitous baseness of the human heart, served the Romans more effectually than the most refined policy of the senate could have done. All that the commonwealth had to do, in order to extend and confirm its empire daily more and more, was only to improve the very passions of their allies and enemies. All the neighbouring powers were attentively observant of each others conduct, and desiring nothing so much as to find one another guilty in some respect or other, they mutually kept each other in subjection.

The princes, enriched by means of the Romans, were astonished to find themselves reduced to the same low condition with those they had contributed to humble. The more powerful they are, the greater is their subjection; because the importance of their spoils would have rendered their ruin more certain. They learn to look upon themselves, even in their own kingdoms, only as the officers of the Romans; and the subjects of these royal slaves beheld without astonishment these phantoms of royalty disappear, in order to make room for a prætor. Their fall was by no means a revolution.

It is fit I should stop short a moment, in order to explain more at large the conduct observed by the allies and neighbours of the Roman commonwealth. Massinissa only entered into alliance with them, when Scipio had driven the Carthaginians out of Spain; which was by no means a proper season for so doing. He would have acted the part of a good politician, had he at first counter-balanced the fortune of Carthage, by making a diversion in favour of the commonwealth of Rome, when Annibal appeared ready to overpower them; for the Carthaginians could not triumph over Rome, without
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becoming much more powerful than they were in Africa, and, consequently, giving just reason of alarm to Numidia. But as Maffiniffa, joined with the Carthaginians, when he ought to have succoured the Romans; so he became the friend of these last, when he ought to have renounced their alliance, supported the Carthaginians, and secured his own liberty by defending theirs.

Syphax followed his example, by first joining the Carthaginians, then contracting an alliance with the Romans, when they stood in need of none. It was by no means out of policy, that he abandoned them, or because he thought it his interest not to suffer the Carthaginians to be overpowered; it was his love for Sophoniffa, that made him too late take a course, in itself, indeed, wise and politic, but in the then situation of affairs very imprudent, since Carthage must necessarily fall, notwithstanding all the succours he could bring to its relief.

Philip acted a wise part, if the alliance, contracted between him and Annibal after the battle of Cannæ, was the effect of his reflections on the government, genius, and policy of Rome and Carthage. It was his interest to extirpate the commonwealth of Rome, as being a warlike and victorious state, that looked upon each neighbouring power as its enemy. The Carthaginians, on the contrary, were a much less enterprising people, that ceased to be feared, when they had no longer an Annibal at their head. Philip, however, did not continue steadily to pursue the same conduct; he trembled at what the Romans did to repair their losses; their threats intimidated him, instead of making him more sensible, how necessary it was for him to assist Annibal to compleat their ruin, and to do every thing that Carthage itself ought to have done. From
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this time, the conduct of this prince was one continued series of gross blunders *.

One would think that the bad policy, observed in regard to the commonwealth of Rome, during the second Punic war, was the model which every state proposed for their imitation, when they attempted new conquests. No sooner had the Greeks, who were so blind to their own interests, as to prefer the neighbourhood of the Romans to that of Philip, prevailed upon the former to make war on Macedonia †, than all its neighbours were in arms against it. Attalus ought to have succoured it; his situation was the same during this war with that of Massinissa in the war of Annibal, and his conduct no less imprudent. Antiochus was the only ally Philip had in this war; but, whether it was, that this prince wanted resolution, or could not persist in any one course, or that he was influenced by the antient jealousy which divided the successors of Alexander, he could not but see with some pleasure Philip humbled. He had no sooner begun to make a feeble diversion by attacking Attalus, than he claps up a peace with him at the first orders from Rome.

The Macedonians being routed at Cynocephale, had no sooner submitted to the humbling conditions imposed by Flamininus, than the Romans, always impatient to enlarge their dominions, meditated a revenge upon Antiochus, for the hostilities he had committed on the territories of Attalus. They ordered him to evacuate the cities of Asia, which had belonged to the kings of Macedonia, and to beware of disturbing the tranquility of Greece, by transporting troops into

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Europe.

* See my observations on the Greeks.

† This war begun in the year of Rome 553, two years after that of Annibal had been ended.

Europe. Antiochus, encouraged by the Ætolians to take up arms, began the war, and had the same fate with Philip. No body assisted him in his misfortune, he being, to use the expression of Livy, crushed under the weight of the whole world.

This war merits particular attention*, not for the great events it produced, but those it might have produced, if Antiochus had had the courage to get over the prejudices of the times he lived in, by following the advice of Annibal. This great man being obliged to leave his country, and seek an asylum among the enemies of Rome, had retired to the court of Syria. It is a very singular sight, to see a private citizen of an almost ruined commonwealth, himself too a fugitive, proscribed, and without fortune or soldiers, whose genius prescribes to that of Rome, and who endeavours to excite the whole world against a power, which the greatest kings could not behold without terror.

“ Could the princes, said he to Antiochus, forget
 “ their private animosities; could they be convinced
 “ that there is a greatness preferable to the enlargement of their dominions, then Rome, which is only
 “ powerful by their divisions and avarice, would cease
 “ to triumph. Thanks to the blind and inveterate
 “ hatred of nations against each other, the Romans
 “ find more allies than they desire, and have the forces
 “ of the whole earth at their disposal. All their design in conquering, say they, is for the advantage
 “ of their allies. Can any thing be more false? They
 “ do not support the hardships, fatigues, and dangers
 “ of war, but to gratify their desire of rule; and if
 “ the Romans load their allies with favours, it is only
 “ out of interest. They are sensible how much it is
 “ their advantage to have friends, and that they may
 “ not

* It began in the year of Rome 563.

“ not at once provoke the indignation of all na-
“ tions, to disguise and conceal the tyranny they
“ aim at. As to these allies, of whom they require
“ the most servile compliances, they are already sub-
“ jects, and will soon be slaves. I’ll answer for it,
“ the great fortunes of Attalus, Massinissa, and Eu-
“ menes will be ruined in their turn. The Romans
“ already look upon Asia as their prey; your en-
“ deavours to avoid breaking with them, will be
“ to no purpose; they can form an honourable pre-
“ text for beginning hostilities. In these new dangers,
“ which threaten the throne of Syria, you must re-
“ nounce the maxims of your ancestors, and form a
“ new scheme of policy. The question is not now
“ to make yourself be looked upon as the only law-
“ ful successor of Alexander, or to recover the dis-
“ membered parts of his monarchy. At present, your
“ whole study should be how to support your ancient
“ enemies; you may subdue them whenever you please,
“ after having made use of their forces in weaken-
“ ing the commonwealth of Rome that threatens you.
“ When Philip, provoked by the pride of his conque-
“ rors, is secretly fired with indignation, and only waits
“ a favourable opportunity to shake off the yoke, his
“ cause too, and yours being the same; why do you
“ give him no assistance? Even you yourself have, in
“ some sort, been conquered at Cynocephale; Macé-
“ donia is no more the bulwark of Asia. As for
“ Philip, his misfortunes are going to be riveted more
“ firm; he will be surrounded by the Roman forces
“ on all hands, if you permit them to enter your
“ dominions. Notwithstanding the hatred between
“ you, Philip is less your enemy than the common-
“ wealth of Rome. Extricate him out of his pre-
“ sent unhappy situation, if it were only to secure

“ your own throne. Let a close union be established
“ between the greatest king of Europe, and the greatest
“ of Asia.”

“ But, continued Annibal, the enemies of Rome
“ have hitherto found no allies; because in the very
“ beginning of a war, they have discovered how much
“ afraid they were to undertake it: their pusillani-
“ mity hath kept every body from taking a share in
“ their dangers. Defer not till the Romans establish
“ the theatre of war in the heart of your dominions.
“ Their empire, which in Italy stands on a precarious
“ footing, will bear you down here with the forces
“ of all the nations they have conquered, that fear
“ to be so, or that hope to enrich themselves with
“ your spoils. The Spaniards, Africans, Italians,
“ Greeks, Macedonians, all the world will contribute
“ to your ruin. Besides, though it should be your
“ fortune to meet with the most compleat, as well
“ as constant success, how many battles must you ha-
“ zard, before the Romans can be driven out of your
“ kingdom? They must also be pursued into Greece
“ and Macedonia, and these provinces conquered, be-
“ fore it is possible to drive them into their own
“ country, or endanger the being of their state. Two
“ victories, on the contrary, obtained in Italy, will
“ make these bullying heroes tremble for the capitol.
“ Trust the hatred I bear them for shipping and sol-
“ diers; I shall visit Italy a second time, where I will
“ find people wearied with the greatness of their
“ masters, and whom I have already inspired with the
“ desire of liberty. If it be my fortune to gain ano-
“ ther battle of Thrasimene, or Cannæ, Rome will
“ fall by your arms. I will bring over to your al-
“ liance and friendship all the states that are jealous
“ of

“ of the Roman commonwealth, or whose only policy
“ is to join the strongest. They will stand in the
“ same awe of you as they do of the Romans; they
“ will have the same attachment to your interest, as
“ at present they have to that of the Romans, had
“ you but the resolution to make these tyrants of na-
“ tions tremble.”

Notwithstanding the slavish dispositions of the world at this juncture, never was there a more favourable opportunity of making the Romans a second time dread all the dangers they had risked in the second Punic war. If some of their allies were sincerely attached to them, the greater part began to see, that they had purchased their fortunes at too high a rate. The protection of the Roman commonwealth was a burden to them, by reason of the excessive gratitude it required. They sent their succours to gain new conquests, and at the same time wished the Romans might be overcome. The Italians themselves no longer confound their interests with those of Rome; they are sensible of their subjection; they murmur, they complain, and only wait for another Annibal, in order to have an opportunity of shaking off their yoke.

These dispositions were so far from being concealed, that the consul Sulpicius dreading the consequences, expostulated very freely with the senate for their delay in transporting the legions into Greece, after having declared war against Philip. “ Let us use dispatch,
“ said he; if Philip prevent us, by making Italy the
“ seat of the war, while we very imprudently threaten him, before letting him feel the weight of our
“ arms, we shall run the hazard of finding a second
“ Annibal; for our neighbours will continue our friends
“ only so long, as they can find none of our ene-
“ mies,

“mies, to whom they may with safety attach themselves*.”

The Ætolians, who had flattered themselves, that the empire of Greece would be the reward of their services in favour of the Romans against Macedonia, were extremely chagrined to find themselves disappointed of their expectation. They were too active politicians not to meditate revenge, by endeavouring to engage all the neighbouring powers in their alliance. The other states of Greece too, were no longer the dupes of the favours of the Roman commonwealth; the charm begins to break; they are sensible that Flamininus had in a manner cancelled the gift he had made them of liberty, by forbidding all association among their cities. Cisalpine Gaul was not wholly subdued, and some provinces of Spain defended their liberty with the greatest bravery. In one word, Annibal, whose very name filled the Romans with terror,

* *Nunquam isti populi, nisi deerit ad quem desciscant, a nobis non deficient.* Tit. Liv. l. 31. It is very surprising, that, tho' the Romans were acquainted with the change which the second Punic war had produced in the sentiments of the Italians, they never thought of remedying it. Nothing was more easy after Annibal's leaving Italy; the conferring on them some title or peculiar mark of distinction would have been sufficient. I add too, that nothing was of greater importance. This none can doubt of, after having read Annibal's proposal to Antiochus, the consequences whereof might have proved so dangerous. It is necessary also to recollect here, what I have said in the first part of this work, in relation to the disorders occasioned in the Roman state by the ambition of the people of Italy to obtain the title of Roman citizens. All this ought to have been foreseen, and it was a gross blunder not to have done it.

ror †, and who was capable of inspiring every nation with courage, kept up a correspondence in Africa, in Greece, and even in Gaul. If he had a second time entered Italy, at the head of all the forces of Asia, Rome would in one day have lost the authority it exercised over its allies. They would have disobeyed, because they could do it with impunity; so that Rome would have been left to defend itself by its own forces alone.

Antiochus, in whose power it was to decide the fate of the world, had too mean sentiments to relish the wise, though daring counsel of Annibal. The promises of this great man appeared vague and confused to him, because he could not understand their justness; he judged that to be rash, which in itself was great and brave; and was wholly ruled by groveling passions, being the dupe of the jealousy of his courtiers, and the weakness of his ministers. Like all the other princes of the east, he was intoxicated with his own greatness; and being likewise checked by his natural pusillanimity, he could neither believe that by

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making

† The Romans used the name Annibal proverbially (in their conversation) to denote a wicked, dangerous, and terrible fellow. It is used in this sense in Plautus, and some other antient authors. We may see in historians, with what meanness the Romans fought Annibal's destruction. This great man finding that Prusias, to whom he had retired, on leaving the court of Antiochus, would be obliged to deliver him up to his enemies, chose rather to poison himself. "Let me, said he, deliver the Romans from the terror with which I inspire them. They had formerly the generosity to warn Pyrrhus to be on his guard against a traitor that designed to poison him; but at present the dastards solicit Prusias to betray the rights of hospitality, by putting me to death.

making war on the Romans, he was in danger of utter ruin; nor persuade himself, that it was possible for him to overturn that vast power to which every thing gave way. Never did prince display in so clear a light, the weakness and contradiction, which pride and cowardice is capable of producing in the same person. Being always full of the projects of his ancestors upon Greece and Macedonia, his antient enemies, he could not prevail on himself to ask their assistance against the Romans. On the contrary, he begins the war by insulting over Philip; and at the same time, that he obliges this prince to declare in favour of the Romans against himself, he is seized with terror, repents of his undertaking, and agrees to yield a part of his dominions in order to preserve the rest.

3 Had Mithridates filled the throne of Antiochus, the Romans would have been undone. What a fine fight would it have been, to see the interest of that prince and Annibal's united, and them in concert executing all the resources of their genius against a powerful people, whom it was absolutely necessary to destroy, or acknowledge for their master! The commonwealth of Rome never feared but these two men; one of whom was born only a private citizen of a state that frustrated his hopes, and who afterwards could find no king that dared to second him. The other was a king, but he lived at a time, when all the provinces were governed by Roman magistrates, and accustomed to obey. In the heat of his passion, he conceived vast designs; his hopes and resources were always greater than his misfortunes. He carried on a war of forty years against Sylla, Cotta, Lucullus, and Pompey; but he exhausted his revenues in Greece and Asia. Whatever was the cause, he neglected to improve the favourable opportunity which the revolt of the Samnites, and

and their allies, gave him of carrying his arms into the heart of Italy; and only thought of following Annibal's example, when it was impossible for him to put his design in execution.

The defeat of Antiochus confirmed all nations in that wretched policy, which hastened the loss of their liberty. In such a situation of affairs, did Perseus preposterously attempt to arm Macedonia; and all the world armed against him. Prusias chose to be only a spectator of this war. If he was afraid that his neutrality would equally offend both parties, he hoped, if the Romans proved victorious, to gain them by mean compliances; or if fortune declared in favour of Perseus, to obtain pardon from him by means of his sister, whom he had taken to wife. Gentius, king of Illyricum, and the Rhodians acted an equivocal part that only creates enemies, which good policy will always condemn, and yet is looked upon by men of a timorous disposition, as the height of wisdom, and a master-piece in the art of government. Without effectually assisting Perseus, which it was their interest to have done with all their power, or to have neglected him entirely, they did no more than was barely sufficient to provoke the Romans against them. We may observe the same absurd conduct, followed by all the enemies of Rome. Bocchus succoured Jugurtha, when that prince had lost his kingdom. Tigranes behaved in the same manner towards Mithridates; whereas both of them, as all historians judiciously observe, ought to have taken this course sooner, or not at all.

BOOK III.

Argument. The ill use which the Romans make of their power. Their boundless avarice. In what manner they lost what constituted the security and greatness of the commonwealth. The state of the empire under Constantine. The fall of the western empire; also the weakness and final ruin of that of the east.

IN such a general insensibility as I have represented all nations under, the commonwealth of Rome would have wanted enemies, and consequently wars to carry on, if it had deferred to take arms till provoked by some offence. Rome from the beginning had laid it down as an inviolable maxim of government, to grant its protection or mediation to all who desired that favour; but when it arrived to such a degree of power as to prescribe to all its neighbours, their readiness to obey, shewed that it was the depositary of all the rights of mankind, and that it became the dignity of the commonwealth, to erect a tribunal, that should determine the disputes of nations. The Romans no longer make war as enemies, but arbitrators. Does there happen any difference between two free nations? The senate sometimes pronounces sentence without consulting them, and their ambassador, followed by legions, with orders to see the decree put into execution, snatches the prey from the conqueror, reinstates the conquered in their possessions, and gives both to understand, that they had a master. Rome determined the fate of the whole world; the kings, princes, ambassadors of all nations, appeared there

there in quality of supplicants, sometimes to justify themselves, and sometimes to beg favours.

The Romans would have rested content with this empire, and not made a bad use of it, if they had preserved their antient manners; but their conquests, as I have already taken notice, having enriched them, the gold of the whole earth was not able to satisfy their craving appetite, after that these riches had inspired them with a taste of pleasures. When avarice had taken the place of the love of glory in the heart of the citizens, the ambition of the commonwealth became an insatiable desire of pillaging and oppressing every thing; and its policy being made subservient to new passions, must move by different springs from what it had done before. As the Romans were jealous of the fortune of their allies, they looked upon it as so much stolen from theirs.

In order to plunder the provinces with the better grace, it was necessary to assume a direct jurisdiction over them. The kingdoms of Numidia, Pergamus, Cappadocia, and Bythinia, which by the favour of Rome had become considerable states, were dissolved. As the senate still carried on a kind of commerce with thrones, creating, or deposing kings at pleasure, kingdoms had no fixt rule of succession. We may here recollect into what wretched state Macedonia fell by the defeat of Perseus. The most distinguished subjects were banished, the kingdom itself being divided into four provinces, between which all communication was prohibited. The fate of Greece, after the taking of Corinth by Mummius, was that of all the allies of Rome. Prætors were set up in the provinces, who thought every thing allowable, because nothing could resist them; so that nothing was heard at Rome, but the

the news of violences committed by its officers in all parts.

Every country that afforded booty to satisfy the avarice of the Romans, became an enemy's country. Some princes secured the tranquility of their subjects, and spared themselves the trouble and fatigue of an useless defence, by naming to the succession of their kingdoms a commonwealth, powerful and corrupted enough to commit acts of injustice without fear or remorse. Florus tells us, that the fame of the riches of Ptolemy, king of Cyprus, made the Romans pass a decree ordaining themselves his heir *. "No matter for your rights, said Sylla to Mithridates, obey implicitly what is imposed on you, or make yourself stronger than we." Could Brennus, who formerly appeared such a barbarian to the Romans, for saying that every thing belonged to the conqueror, speak another language?

No nation is able to secure itself from the enterprises and oppressions of the Romans. However attentive it might be, to furnish no pretext of rupture, some crime was always found to lay to its charge, for which it must be chastised. Let us only read the speech of Manlius, after his return from the expedition against the Gallogrecians. Furius and Emilius, who were his enemies, endeavoured to cause a triumph to be denied him, under the pretence, that the war he had ended was unjust. Manlius, however, easily confounded them, by representing that the Gauls had formerly pillaged the temple of Delphi, and that this impiety of theirs had not been punished till then.

* *Divitiarum tanta fama erat, ut victor gentium populus, et donare regna consuetus, socii vivique regis confiscationem mandaverit.* Flo. l. 3. c. 9.

then †. If this one passage is not deemed enough to paint to the life the character of the Romans, we may see in Justin, that they were not ashamed to alledge, as a sufficient reason, for their undertaking the defence of the Acarnanians against the Ætolians, that the ancestors of the first were the only people of Greece, who had not sent troops to the siege of Troy †: this was adding raillery to violence.

When once a nation becomes greatly superior to its enemies in strength, it is possible for it to be unjust and detested by the whole world, and yet successful in its enterprizes. The whole of history is but too convincing a proof of this sad truth. We ought not therefore to be surprized, that the commonwealth of Rome, after having artfully paved the way to enslave its allies, and accustomed them to be obedient subjects, continued to make new conquests, notwithstanding the acts of injustice and violence it was guilty of. But after its domestic divisions began to break out, how was it practicable for a government, that could not repress the ambition of its own citizens, still to keep many conquered nations in their duty, and make itself respected by strangers? One would think, that the civil wars which destroyed the liberty of the Romans, must likewise have ruined their empire; and yet at the

† Delphos, quondam commune humani generis oraculum, umbilicum orbis terrarum, Galli spoliaverunt: nec ideo populus Romanus his bellum indixit aut intulit. Liv. l. 38.

† Acarnanes adversus Ætolos auxilium Romanorum implorantes, obtinuerunt a Romano senatu, ut legati mitterentur, qui denunciarent Ætolis, præsidia ab uribus Acarnaniæ deducerent, paterenturque esse liberos, qui soli quondam adversus Trojanos, auctores originis suæ, auxilia Græcis non miserint. Tit. Liv. l. 28.

the very time, that the commonwealth was going to wreck, they repelled and conquered Mithridates, and, which was the most difficult of all their enterprises, subdued Gaul, checked the Germans, and penetrated even into Britain.

Rome continued to triumph, because its armies were still better disciplined, and more enured to the hardships of war, than those of its enemies; and the victories obtained over these, inspired the provinces that had lost the very idea of liberty, with a just terror. If the Roman generals were no longer men of eminent virtue, they were at least men of great abilities; and as those ambitious spirits, who aspired at sovereignty, found it necessary to gain a reputation in the commonwealth, and by their victories to dazzle the eyes of their countrymen, that they might the more easily be oppressed, they took care their characters should suffer no eclipse in their several governments, and likewise made themselves respected by strangers.

In short, as the Romans were full of those haughty passions inspired by liberty, and the success of their arms, they, in the midst of all their vices, preserved such an elevation of soul, as to chuse the man that should command them by his merit, which according to them consisted wholly in military accomplishments. Had a magistrate endeavoured to seize the government, by the sinister means of intrigue, he was deemed a conspirator, whom it was an easy matter to ruin. Had Sylla, that he might the sooner return to Italy to be revenged on Marius's party, made a dishonourable peace with Mithridates, it is probable his own soldiers would have refused to follow him; and at Rome every citizen would have been his enemy. Cæsar too found it necessary to conquer Gaul, in order to pave his way to empire.

That

That emulation, which during the troubles of the commonwealth, kept up the reputation of its armies, by contributing to the improvement of every accomplishment; quite vanished as soon as Augustus established a monarchy. I have already * assigned the reason why the empire was not ruined by the tyranny of Tiberius, Claudius, Caligula, and Nero; and I beg leave to observe here, that had the slavery imposed on the senate and people of Rome, by these monsters of men, extended itself to the armies, the empire would immediately have gone to wreck, as being deprived of every thing which gave the commonwealth a superiority over its enemies; nor would it have ever enjoyed such happy times, as it did when inspired by the genius of the Scipio's and Emilius's.

As the armies made themselves feared by the successors of Augustus, and as these princes were obliged to treat them with the utmost lenity, there still subsisted in the camp something of the antient republican spirit: the soldiers imagined themselves citizens, as being free from oppression; and in this consisted the whole security of the empire against foreigners. The armies being always stationed on the frontiers, preserved a martial spirit, notwithstanding the decay of discipline; and by frequently coming to blows with the barbarians, improved themselves in many military accomplishments. Luxury and ease did not enervate them. In a word, as the soldiers minded their exercises, they wanted only an able general to be able still to perform great things. Thus Agricola reduced Britain into a Roman province; and Trajan, after having conquered the Dacæ, Armenians, and Parthians, with the kingdoms of Assyria and Chaldea, carried his arms to the frontiers of India.

Trajan's

* See Part I. Book III.

Trajan's conquests discovered the extreme weakness of the empire, and in fact, more ability was necessary to preserve than acquire them; so that Adrian, however accomplished a prince, thought proper to abandon them, being hardly able to support the weight of such a multiplicity of affairs, as the vices and vast extent of the empire gave rise to. How was it possible to keep remote and powerful nations in their duty, who being only once conquered, were still desirous and full of hopes to shake off the yoke; and that too at a time, when the nations on the Danube and Rhine became daily more formidable? The Romans looked upon this unhappy situation of Adrian as the fatal epocha of their declining, being persuaded that the god Terminus, who guarded their frontiers, had at last withdrawn the protection he had hitherto vouchsafed them.

The empire did not long enjoy the happiness of seeing that order, courage, and discipline prevail in its armies, which had been the effects of the wisdom of Trajan, Adrian, and Marcus Aurelius. No sooner did the armies dispose of the imperial diadem, than the emperors, who were only their slaves, made it their chief study to flatter the passions of the soldiery; who squandered in debauchery what they had got by rapine, or the donations the emperors were obliged to give them.

As they were either enervated by pleasures, or become insolent by the habit they had acquired of caballing and forming seditions, it was impossible to make them perform the antient exercises, or subject them to the fatigues of war*. Camps, formerly places of strength,

* Caracalla courted the friendship of the soldiers by the meanest flattery. He was the first of the emperors, who, by express laws, authorized the relaxation of military discipline.

strength, were no longer fortified with ditches and ramparts. The arms were thought too heavy, so that it was necessary to leave off the cuirasse and helmet. In this general decline of discipline, military accomplishments were utterly disregarded. The soldiers, who were most forward to mutiny and cabal, received the rewards due to merit alone; and from the time that intrigue took place of virtue, vice flourished with impunity.

Whilst the corruption introduced among the soldiery, and the bloody wars wherein the armies tore each other to pieces, left the empire in a manner without defence, there happened a revolution in Scandinavia, the European Scythia, and Sarmatia: The earth seemed there to bring forth men. Whether it was, that the barbarians, who inhabited these vast regions, had been informed, that there were more fertile countries, and less severe climates toward the south; or that the restless and martial genius, which had always made them send out colonies to remote countries, was become the ruling and general disposition of these nations; there daily swarmed from them armies of various people, who laying every thing waste in their way, poured at last upon the territories of the empire. Goths, Gepides, Alans, Massagetes, Vandals, Sarmatians, and Scythians; nothing was able to resist these barbarians, whom no danger frightened, and whose numbers seemed to increase by their defeats. All the glory they aspired at, was to load themselves with booty; and the vast quantities they carried home with them, excited a general emulation. Hence the devastations suffered by any of the Roman provinces, were only the forerunners of greater to come.

Domitian had the meanness to purchase peace of the Dacæ. Adrian too, in the latter part of his reign,

at which time the Alans and Massagetes made an irruption into Media, Armenia, and Cappadocia, prevailed on these barbarians by presents, to leave the provinces they had already pillaged: this possibly he was induced to do, because he durst not trust any of his generals with forces sufficient to expel them. These pernicious examples were but too much followed by princes void of every principle of honour, or that were more solicitous to destroy a rival to the imperial diadem, than maintain the glory and prosperity of the empire.

When the northern nations saw that they could enrich themselves, merely by intimidating the Romans, they daily undertook new enterprizes. But supposing those who contracted with the empire, had been faithful to their engagements, the pusillanimous conduct of the emperors would have been equally destructive. A state which doth not oppose force to its enemies, multiplies them, because thereby it makes itself contemptible. Besides, as the barbarians formed different nations, or independant tribes, what was agreed upon with one set of them, did not bind the rest; and since the whole riches of the empire, would not have been sufficient to satisfy one party of them, it being likewise impossible to treat with them all, there was a necessity to make a bold push, in order, if possible, to intimidate them, by exterminating the first that should pillage a province.

The Romans might have transported their principal forces to the Danube and Rhine, and by that means provided for the security of the countries most exposed to the insults of these barbarians, if there had not arisen at the same time a very powerful enemy to the empire in Asia, which kept them from leaving their frontiers on that side without a sufficient guard.

guard. The kingdom of Parthia, formerly so terrible, even to the Roman armies †, had begun to lose its reputation after the famous battle wherein the troops of Orodes, under the command of Pacorus, were entirely routed by Ventidius. Phraates, who mounted the throne soon afterwards, was far from being a proper person to raise anew the courage of his subjects. This cruel, though dastardly prince, saw his dominions divided into different parts. The revolutions too which he had experienced, made him so diffident of his own fortune, that when Augustus went into Asia to regulate affairs there, he by mere threats obliged him to return the Roman standards taken from Crassus and Antony, and to give his own sons for hostages of the peace*.

A people like the Parthians, who owe their courage and success more to the savageness of their manners †, than the wisdom of their policy, could not

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suffer

* Romanis quoque, trinis bellis, per maximos duces, florentissimis temporibus, soli ex omnibus gentibus non pares solum, verum etiam victores fuere. Justin. l. 41.

* Finito Hispaniensi bello, cum in Syriam ad componendum Orientis statum venisset, (Augustus) metum Phraati incussit, ne bellum Parthiæ vellet inferre. Itaque tota Parthia captivi ex Crassiano, sive Antonii exercitu recollecti, signaque cum his militaria Augusto remissa, sed & filii nepotesque Phraatis obsides Augusto dati: plusque Cæsar magnitudine nominis sui fecit, quam armis alius imperator facere potuisset. Justin. l. 42.

† Exercitum non ut aliæ gentes liberorum, sed majorem partem servorum habent ——— Hos equitare & sagittare magna industria docent ——— nec pugnare diu possunt: cæterum intolerandi forent, si quantus his impetus est, vis tanta & perseverantia esset ——— Carne non nisi venatibus quæsitæ vescuntur ——— ingenia genti tumida,

suffer the least decline without being utterly ruined. From vices that produce ferocity, the Parthians passed to those which enervate, and were finally conquered by Trajan. It was not by arms they regained their liberty, but by the gift of Adrian. In a word, their monarchy was at length so reduced, that one mutiny was sufficient to overturn it. A Persian, called Artaxerxes, who had great influence in his own country, exciting some seditious mutinies that were not speedily enough quelled, the mutineers at length conceived hopes of throwing off the Parthian yoke †. Artaban, king of Parthia, was overcome and slain in battle, which event produced a singular change in the character of the Persians. Their victory gave new life to their courage; they thought themselves capable of performing great things, so that their new monarchy, no less formidable than that of the Parthians was contemptible, was animated with a spirit of ambition, not inferior to that of the successors of Cyrus. It looked upon Asia as its antient domain, treated the Romans as usurpers, and formed the design of repelling them into Europe.

If the empire, after having been governed by so contemptible men as Caracalla, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Maximinus, Pupienus, Balbinus, and Gallus, was not ruined under that weak and voluptuous prince Galienus, whose reign was disturbed by the revolt of all the armies; it was owing to this, that the Persians,

tumida, seditiosa, fraudulenta, procacia ——— semper
aut in externos, aut in domesticos motus inquieti ———
Principibus metu non pudore parent. Justin. l. 41.

† This revolution happened in the reign of the emperor Alexander Severus, and year of the christian æra 226.

fians, willing to preserve the countries they got into their possession, extended themselves by little and little; and that the northern nations, who had no idea of conquests and establishments, as yet proposed to themselves no other end in making war, than to carry off the spoils of the Roman provinces into their forests.

Under the reigns of the emperors Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, the empire seemed to resume new strength. The first obtained signal advantages over the Goths and Germans; the second was present every where, according as the occasions of the empire required. After being victorious on the banks of the Danube and Rhine, his good fortune followed him into Asia and Egypt. Probus too, after having triumphed over the barbarians in Dalmatia and Thrace, and forcing them to retire on the other side of the Neker and Elbe, obliged likewise the Persians not to disturb the tranquility of the east.

But had the empire even continued to be ruled by such able princes, as those I have been speaking of, its fall would have been equally certain. What kind of victories must they be, where all that is gained is only a respite from being pillaged by the enemy, and which never reimburse the expence and loss they have occasioned? As the empire was weakened even by its success, it would at last have found itself unable to acquire more.

These emperors would not have been able to perform what they did, had they mounted the throne an age later, that is to say, after Dioclesian; who, by making a new regulation, that the empire should be governed for the future, by two emperors and two cæsars, had accustomed the armies to obey, and there-

by confirmed the fortune of his successors *. Two causes contributed to the success of Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus; one is, that the empire, however exhausted by the calamities it had suffered, was notwithstanding still able to furnish the necessary expences for a war; and the other, that it was easy for these princes to raise numerous armies. As the condition of a soldier, after that the armies disposed of the imperial dignity, was the only happy one; and the taking up the profession of arms, was to change the quality of a slave, for that of an oppressor and tyrant, the emperor found always more soldiers at his disposal than he had use for.

But under the successors of Dioclesian, all the provinces were plunged into the most deplorable misery; and as the soldiers had it no longer in their power to depose the emperors, plunder the people, and in an arbitrary way to force gratifications from their masters, their condition was no longer envied, nor were any willing to carry arms. Galienus had already made a law, prohibiting the senators from serving in the armies, and restricting them to offices merely civil: this was debasing the senate and armies at the same time.

After the reign of Dioclesian, the citizens most distinguished by their birth, were only ambitious of civil offices, or to have places at court under the emperors, who no sooner were freed from the terror of being dethroned, than they gave themselves up to effeminacy. As to the people in general, though greatly oppressed with impositions and public services, they preferred indolence and poverty at home, to the dangers and fatigues of war. The legions were now wholly

* This is a very remarkable epocha in the Roman history, which has been sufficiently considered in Part I. Book III.

wholly composed of men taken from their families by force; so that, without my taking any notice of it, every body must see, that the armies could not but lose much of the courage they had hitherto preserved, notwithstanding the decline of discipline.

In such unhappy circumstances, that the emperors might not leave the empire exposed to the inroads of its enemies, they entered into a treaty with some tribes of the barbarians, who, on their part, subsisted with some difficulty, after the Roman provinces were become so desolate and exhausted, as to afford no more rich booty to satiate their avarice. They at first took them into their pay for some particular service; and afterwards bestowed upon them lands within their own territories, in quality of auxiliaries, thereby opposing them like a bulwark to the other barbarians. It was with the assistance of the Goths, that Dioclesian himself reduced Egypt; and that Maximian routed the Persians, penetrated into the kingdom of Sapore, and compelled that prince to sue for peace.

Jornandes observes, that without the aid of the barbarians, who fought for the Romans, the emperors after Dioclesian could never have formed any considerable enterprize; but it is no less certain, that this resource must prove fatal to the empire. These auxiliaries preserved their customs, their laws, and independency; and the more sensible they were of what importance their service was, the more despicable did the emperors appear in their eyes. The untractableness of one tribe of them, and the savageness of others, bred continual jealousies among them. Their quarrels were frequent; and if a rupture ensued, what formidable enemies must not these barbarians prove to the empire, who, being wearied of a wandering life, knew the advantage of a solid settlement, and no longer

made war after the manner of their ancestors, as having learned the art of conquering from the Roman generals themselves?

Such was the situation of the empire when Constantine mounted the throne; who, though possessed of some martial accomplishments, which he employed in ruining his personal enemies, and not those of the Romans, had none of those qualities that are proper for government. He was so much the dupe of his ministers and favourites, as to see nothing but by their means; and they in return, made an ill use of this weakness. His natural restless temper kept him always in action, but frequently without success. If at any time he was employed about designs of importance, they were such as his presumption and vanity had dictated, and in the execution of which, he shewed himself to be but an indifferent politician.

Though many authors have been prodigal in their praises of this prince, he, notwithstanding, contributed more than any other to hasten the downfall of the empire. He increased the armies, it is true, with ten legions, and caused some forts to be built on the frontiers; but utterly extinguished the remains of discipline and courage among the soldiers. Before his time, the armies were always kept encamped in the neighbourhood of the enemy, and their constant danger and exercise, had preserved a spirit of valour among them; but after Constantine had drawn them off from the frontiers, in order to place them in garrisons and cities in the heart of the provinces, they were not only bad subjects, but by the new vices which they contracted in their new quarters, became unfit to carry arms.

The building of a new metropolis, at a time when it was so difficult to preserve the old one, shewed how little he understood the interest of the empire. Could any thing

thing be more impolitic than to expend immense sums in erecting a superb city, when the empire was so exhausted, by the many calamities it had suffered, as to be able with great difficulty to provide for the subsistence of its armies? Byzantium, to which Constantine gave his own name, became the rival of Rome, or rather quite eclipsed it. Italy by this means was humbled to the lowest degree. There misery, in its most frightful dress, reigned in the midst of half-ruined palaces and houses of pleasure, which the lords of the world had formerly erected. All manner of riches centered in the east, because the tribute and commerce of the provinces were transferred thither. The west, however, had the whole shock of the barbarians to sustain; whence, instead of weakening it in this manner, it ought to have received additional forces.

Another still more mischievous project of Constantine, was his dividing the empire in a more determinate manner, than had hitherto been done. His successors, who were immediately jealous of each other, began to look upon their interests as opposite, and in a short time, came to an open rupture. The emperors of the east, fearing to provoke the barbarians to invade their territories, durst not send any assistance to those of the west. They even sometimes raised them enemies; and gave the Vandals, Goths, &c. one part of their riches, that they might be permitted to spend the other in pleasures, at the very time when these barbarous nations carried their arms into the heart of Italy.

If the observation be reasonable, that mankind would then be happy, when philosophers were at the helm of affairs, how flourishing must the new religion professed by Constantine make the empire, if that grace, which had opened his eyes to see the errors of paganism,

ganism, had triumphed over the vices of his heart? But Constantine, though a christian, was much inferior in virtue to the pagan Marcus Aurelius.

What the greatest legislators and the wisest philosophers could not effect, that the publication of the gospel had brought about; for Christians being raised above the weaknesses of human nature, practised with ease, what impotent stoicism only advised. So pure a religion as christianity, which, at the same time that it commanded the practice of every virtue, communicated sufficient strength to obey its precepts, ought to have purged the empire of all the corruptions that hastened its fall. One might have expected to see none but good subjects; and that the emperors, who were now undeceived in regard to the absurd apotheoses, which had contributed to make them more wicked, would learn that there is a supreme being, before whom all persons are upon a level; that the meanest of the human race were brothers to the highest; that it was the duty of individuals to sacrifice their lives to the good of society; and that nothing is great or wise, but what is just.

But unhappily the Christians were less attentive to their conduct, when their religion became the established and favourite one. The tranquility they enjoyed, made them believe courage less necessary; and from that time, the favours of Constantine proved more fatal than the persecutions of his predecessors. The ministers of the gospel, it is true, preserved the ancient austerity of manners; but, by I know not what prejudice, they would needs aid the work of God by human policy; in order to propagate religion more speedily, they eased its yoke. This condescension made it impossible for them, to convey into the hearts of the emperors that divine morality in its utmost purity,

rity, whereof they ought to have been the apostles. By disguising its precepts to others, they extinguished their own light; and the vices to which they were too indulgent, at length infected themselves. Pride takes the place of humility. They forget, that the gospel commands nothing but gentleness, patience and charity. Instead of continuing to thank God for having been chosen to honour him with that worship which he requires, and praying, that he would open the eyes of those who were still in error; the Christians called the civil power to their assistance, and seemed as if they would retaliate upon idolatry the hardships it had made them suffer. Constantine caused the most celebrated temples of the false gods to be demolished, prohibited sacrifices, and abolished the solemnities of the pagan festivals. In a short time, the idols were exposed to public derision; they were mutilated, and the imprudent zeal, which ecclesiastical writers lay to the charge of bishop Theophilus, in regard to the Egyptians, and the famous statue of their god Serapis, was but too common. By thus imbittering the spirits of the people, they made them trample the most common laws of humanity under foot.

It would be difficult to paint the calamities produced in the empire by the two rival religions, whose votaries mutually looked upon each other as impious and sacrilegious wretches. Oppressions and violences, to which they were but too much accustomed by arbitrary government, became the more frequent, as they imagined they were only promoting the interests of religion, when, in truth, they were wholly influenced by malice, avarice, and ambition. The pagans triumphed on account of battles lost, provinces pillaged, or any other public calamity, as the plague, or famine; because they either attributed them to the Christians,

rians, or esteemed them so many salutary warnings, which at length would touch the hearts of the emperors, and bring them back to the worship of those gods, who had made the Romans lords of the world. To compleat the misfortune, it was the pleasure of God to permit, that all who adore the cross should not acknowledge the truth. The Christians were divided in regard to the most essential doctrines; and each side being favoured in its turn, by a prince of its own communion, waged a cruel war against its antagonists, which was no less destructive of the temporal welfare of the empire, than contrary to the principles of religion *.

In such unhappy circumstances, what delayed the entire ruin of the empire for a time, was, that the barbarians had turned their arms against one another. In short, Ermaneric, king of the Goths, would have subdued the empire, if he had been as successful against it, as he was in Germany. Several historians have compared him to Alexander. He conquered numbers of states, the knowledge of most of which is now lost. His dominions extended from the Danube to the Baltic sea, and comprehended Germany, and the European Scythia, and Sarmatia.

This prince was ready to invade the provinces of the empire with the united forces of the barbarians, when an unforeseen event put a stop to his expedition. Jornandes relates, that some young Huns hunting near the Palus Mæotis, pursued a hind which leaped

* I take no notice of Julian, who did all that the most refined policy could devise, to ruin christianity and establish idolatry. Constant favoured the Arians, and Jovian the doctrine of the council of Nice. Valens made war on the catholics, and Gratian and Valentinian on the heretics, &c.

leaped into the water, thereby pointing out to them a ford through the lake, which till then they looked upon as an immense and unpassable sea. These hunters being astonished to find land, where they thought the world ended, immediately returned home, and informed their countrymen of this adventure. The curiosity of the Huns was thereby raised, and the ford, discovered by this accident, in a short time became the road by which their whole nation poured into Europe from Asia.

They were frightful to behold, having all the fierceness of bears and tigers, but little, if we except their form, by which they could be denominated men. The Huns were looked upon as monsters by every body, and that even at a time, when all nations were guilty of the most horrid barbarities. In honour of human nature, they denied, that this destructive people had the same origin with other men. It was given out, that they were begotten between demons and those magicians, whom Filimer, the first king of the Goths, had expelled his dominions, and who had taken refuge in the desarts of Caucasus.

The Alipzures, Alcizures, Itamares, Toncasses, Boii, Alans, and all the nations of European Scythia were conquered. These depredations of the Huns had at first a favourable effect in regard to the empire, as the enormous power of the Goths was thereby weakened; and because the consternation of Germany was such, that they were more intent upon defending themselves against these new enemies, than to invade and plunder the Roman provinces. But when the Huns were found to be always more and more successful, so as at length to be accounted invincible, the barbarians abandoned their habitations, and poured upon the territories of the empire, that they might shelter them-

themselves from the slavery with which they were threatened. The Visigoths demanded and obtained the lower Moesia of the emperor Valens, for a place of retreat; and the Vandals, the Suevi, and a tribe of the Alans crossed the Rhine and settled themselves in Gaul by right of conquest*.

Historians tell us, that Stilico, the favourite minister, and consequently the tyrant of Honorius, being weary with reigning under the name of this weak prince, aspired at the imperial diadem; and in order to secure success to his enterprize, that he invited the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi to enter Gaul, after having disposed every thing in such a way, that the barbarians might easily establish themselves there. This perfidious minister, add they, flattered himself, that, in the confusion which this would occasion in the empire, the Romans would confer the crown of Honorius upon himself, or his son Eucherius. If Stilico did really form such a project, he must have been a man more contemptible, if that be possible, for the qualities of his head than those of his heart; but in regard to this, history is silent.

Could he imagine, that the Romans would be fools enough to punish Honorius alone for the success of the barbarians, when it was well known, that this prince was a mere puppet, dressed up in the imperial ornaments? The emperor was only guilty of the faults

of
* The Goths formed only one nation before the interruption of the Huns into Europe. Those who inhabited the eastern provinces of their country, were called Ostrogoths, that is to say, the Goths of the East. Those of the westerly provinces, were called Visigoths, or Goths of the west. But after that the first were subdued by the Huns, and the latter had taken shelter in Moesia, they formed two distinct nations. However, as they always retained the memory of their common origin, they looked upon each other as brothers.

of his ministers: of this, every man in the empire was sensible; and yet they would punish the former in order to reward the latter. What absurdity!

I can by no means allow of the political views attributed to Stilico. On the contrary, in order to usurp the empire, it would have been necessary to triumph over its enemies. Why not believe, that the barbarians who invaded Gaul during his ministry, were determined to do so, because they dreaded the Romans less than the Huns; and that they established themselves in their conquests, both because Gaul was better than Germany, and that in repassing the Rhine, they would have come to blows with the Huns, from whom they had fled †.

While the Vandals are establishing their dominion in Spain, there arose a storm in Moesia, that threatened the capital of the empire itself. The Visigoths, to whom Valens had granted an asylum, still preserved their manners, customs, and laws. This alone was sufficient to render them suspected by princes accustomed to dread every thing, and who were more jealous of the respect due to their character, as they plainly perceived their power diminish.

There daily happened some misunderstanding between them, and their animosities were risen to a great height, when a famine broke out in Moesia. The ministers of the empire thought it their duty to lay hold of so favourable an opportunity, to exterminate the whole nation of the Visigoths. The Roman officers, says Jornandes, made a cruel use of the unhappy situation

† I could produced a hundred arguments in justification of Stilico; but what I have said will be thought sufficient, if I am not mistaken, by people of judgment. This famous irruption of the Vandals into the Gauls, happened in the year of the christian era 406.

situation of these barbarians, by selling them at an exorbitant price, not only ordinary and wholesome meat, but the flesh of infected dogs and horses. To such lengths did they carry their cruelty, as to oblige them to give a slave for one loaf of bread, and ten pounds of gold for a lamb. At last, they made the distressed Visigoths exchange their very children for victuals; and to such horrid inhumanity, they added another piece of villany, which was an attempt to assassinate all the principal men of that nation, who were to be invited to a feast for this purpose.

The Visigoths were so enraged at this inhuman usage, that they chose themselves a king, in order to be in a condition to revenge themselves. In short, they had every thing in readiness to proceed upon laying waste the east, after the example of the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi in the west; but Rufinus, who had the management of Arcadius's affairs, took a very different course from that charged upon Honorius's minister. He pacified the Visigoths by presents; and, whether it was his intention to get rid for ever of these dangerous guests, or that he only wanted to incommode Stilico, who was his personal enemy *, he prevailed on them to turn their arms against Italy, where they would find immense booty. They penetrated as far as Ravenna without resistance, under the command of their king Alaric. This prince proposed to Honorius, either to blend his subjects with the Romans, so as to make only one people, or by battle to decide the fate of the two nations. The emperor,

* According to historians, Stilico pretended, that Theodosius, surnamed the great, had named him regent of the two empires. Hence, say they, he had formed a design of going into the east to dispossess Rufinus, and make his own right be acknowledged.

emperor, who knew from the experience of his predecessors, how dangerous it was to contract an alliance with the barbarians, or possibly designing to impose upon them, eluded Alaric's proposition, by offering them the property of Spain and Gaul.

Honorius might have thought himself happy in having diverted the Visigoths from Italy, by the cession of two provinces, that were already dismembered from the empire, since the Vandals, Suevi, and Alans had settled therein; but Stilico, thinking to surprize them, pursued and attacked them at the foot of the Alps. The barbarians, who chose rather to perish than let the perfidiousness of the Roman general go unpunished, fought with fury. They cut their enemies in pieces, and returning, spread themselves through Italy, marched to Rome, attacked, and took it by assault.

This success of the Visigoths, Vandals, Suevi, Alans, &c. however great in itself, yet was not to be compared to that of the Huns, when Attila became their sole monarch †. This prince, who for his ability, deserved the admiration of the world, if the devastation which he every where committed, had not made him the terror of it, had all the accomplishments of a great man, but used them like a barbarian born, and educated among savages. His courage, prudence, cruelty, perfidy, haughtiness, every quality he was master of, were made equally subservient to his ambition. Before his time, the barbarians had behaved like adventurers, whose restless tempers set them upon action, who had no settled design in view by making war, who gave over an enterprize without reason, who indifferently made

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use

† Attila at first shared the sovereignty with his brother Bleda; but in the year 444 of the christian æra, he caused this prince to be put to death, that he might enjoy the crown alone.

use of the first means which fortune threw in their way, and attempted every thing, but finished nothing. Attila, on the contrary, formed a consistent scheme of aggrandizing himself; and became the more formidable, as he not only commanded a daring, fierce, and well disciplined people, but employed all the address, that his subtle genius could devise against his enemies. He drew after him all the barbarous nations he had conquered. The kings of the Gepides and Ostrogoths were his ministers; and as to the kings of less distinguished nations, they were either blended with the multitude of his courtiers, composed his guards, or appointed to see his orders executed. Neither pride, effeminacy, or any other vice that enervates the mind, had corrupted this savage court, because its master, who was indefatigable, and took a pleasure in business, thought he had done nothing to promote his glory, so long as there remained any nation to subdue. A cottage was his palace; he there gave audience to the ambassadors of Theodosius and Valentinian, whom he treats like subjects, even before he had conquered them*.

This prince would have soon been master of the whole world, had it not been for his defeat in the celebrated battle in the Catalaunian plains, where the Romans, Visigoths, and several other nations, whose interests were the same, united their forces†. The conquerors,

* Your master and mine, said Attila's ambassadors, addressing themselves to the emperors. Theodosius II. obliged himself to pay Attila yearly a tribute of a thousand pounds of gold.

† Jornandes ranks in the number of these allies several tribes of Franks, Sarmatians, Armoritans, Liti-ans, Burgundians, Saxons, Ripariolians, Iberians, Celts, and Germans.

conquerors, however, did not improve their victory by utterly ruining Attila. Possibly it was not in their power, though several historians pretend, that Aetius spared him, as fearing, if he was entirely cut off, the Visigoths would prove too enterprizing, and even attempt to inflame the empire, as a reward for having delivered it from the Huns. Be this as it will, Attila soon recruited his army; and when they thought him vanquished, he immediately appeared again more formidable than the Visigoths would have been, had he been utterly ruined. He penetrates into Italy, lays all waste in his way, and Rome owed its safety only to the prejudice of the barbarians, who looked upon the city as sacred, and to the tears of pope Leo, whose eloquence raised Attila's compassion.

I shall not enlarge farther on the calamities of the western empire, which daily lost some of its provinces. Italy, that had formerly been twice ransacked, again felt the devastations of Genseric, king of the Vandals; and Rome itself becomes a prey at last to Odoacer, king of the Eruli: this prince dethroned Augustulus, the last of the emperors of the west, and imprisoned him in a fort of Campania; but was himself soon dispossessed of his conquests by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths †. There is no doubt, but the empire of the east, would have soon suffered the same fate, if upon the death of Attila, the monarchy

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of

† There are reckoned five hundred and three years from the time that Octavius received the title of Augustus, to that when Augustulus lost the empire; which happened in the year of the christian æra 476.

The monarchy of the Eruli lasted only fourteen years. Theodoric was the founder of the Gothic empire in Italy. These Goths had recovered their independency after the death of Attila.

of the Huns had not been divided into several states, independent of each other. The nations who had lost their liberty, recovered it; they made war on each other, and after the example of the barbarians that had gone before them, they chose rather to settle on the Rhine than the lower Danube. Besides, the north, and the two Scythias were drained of inhabitants.

After so many wars, wherein innumerable thousands of men had been destroyed; the barbarians, who no longer crowded one tribe after another, soon began to be more at ease. Their conquests softened their manners, and gave them a relish for a more settled way of living. As to the kingdom of Persia, whereof I have made mention in the beginning of this book, and which at first was very formidable to the Romans, it was become contemptible to its neighbours, or at least could not give them any cause to be alarmed. The resolution, courage, and valour, with which the revolution had inspired the Persians, quite disappeared, when their kings were fixed on the throne, and became arbitrary and voluptuous.

All this happened very seasonably to prevent the fall of the eastern empire: for being exhausted by the immense tributes paid to the barbarians, it was not in condition to maintain fifty thousand troops; add to this, that its armies had always been less brave and disciplined, than those of the west. As Zeno was a slave to all manner of vices and debaucheries, cruel, avaricious, without courage, despised by his subjects, and had raised a terrible proscription against the grandees of the empire, influenced by the foolish hopes of cutting off his successor, can we suppose him more capable than Augustulus to preserve his crown? Anastasius, his successor, was guilty of the same vices;
and

and besides, his reign was disturbed by the continual seditions of the Eutichians, whom he favoured; and the orthodox, whose doctrine he wanted to corrupt. Justin, who succeeded him, was a man of no capacity; for even when emperor, he retained a meanness of soul, which he had contracted by an education, becoming the most fordid birth.

It is easy to judge, what the situation of the empire must have been, when Justinian came to the crown; to which he had opened himself a way by the infamous assassination of Vitalian. This prince, who was no less contemptible than those already mentioned, gave himself up to be governed by his wife Theodora, whom he had taken from the stage, where she had long acted the prostitute, and who, under her imperial purple, retained all the vices of a courtesan. He sold the laws, justice, and magistracies*. Such was Justinian, and yet during his reign, the empire seemed in some sort to recover its almost extinguished power, by conquering Africa from the Vandals, and Italy from the Goths.

These conquests were the work of Belisarius and Narfes; both great warriors; both possessed of qualities
 Q 3 proper

* In such colours does Procopius, in his secret history, paint Justinian; though in his other writings, he bestows great eulogies on him. The president Montesquieu, in his Reflections concerning the causes of the grandeur and declension of the Romans, Chap. 10. declares himself in favour of the secret history of Procopius, though others writers look upon them as a collection of mere calumnies. After having read the reflections of this critic, in whom genius and erudition go hand in hand, one cannot help believing, that the legislation of Justinian was a robbery; and that for money, he sold laws to all who had any occasion for them.

proper to make them respected, feared and loved by the soldiers; and both, though the subjects of a state where virtue was disregarded, animated by the love of glory, of their country, and the public good. In a word, Narses would possibly have equalled Belisarius, if, instead of inviting the Lombards into Italy to be revenged for the affront he received under the reign of Justin II. he had been able to conquer his resentment, despise his enemies, lament the blindness, or ingratitude of his master, and content himself with rendering him odious, by patiently bearing with his misfortune. The empire, at this period, presents us with a strange appearance. To judge only by events, one would have thought it at the same time on the brink of ruin, and the height of glory. It triumphs in Africa and Italy, because Belisarius and Narses commanded there. But in Asia, where its weakness was supported by no foreign aid, it consents to pay the Persians, a yearly tribute of fifty thousand pounds of gold.

However great accomplishments these two celebrated generals were masters of, they would notwithstanding never have been able to conquer Africa and Italy, with the sole assistance of the empire, if the Vandals and Goths had been as wise in confirming settlements, as they were terrible in making conquests. Procopius describes the Vandals, established in Africa, as a people wholly abandoned to sensuality after the death of Genseric. They spent whole days in perfumed baths, or theatres. Their clothes were gold and silver tissue. The most elegant and exquisite luxury was introduced at their tables. Their houses were magnificent palaces, and their gardens the most delicious possible. The Goths too, without being quite so effeminate in their manners, had lost a great deal
of

of their former courage. Italy had softened their warlike dispositions; as Gaul had corrupted the Visigoths who conquered the Franks; and it is well known with what contempt historians speak of them*.

So far were the barbarians from entertaining any thought of incorporating themselves with the people among whom they settled, that they robbed them of a considerable part of their fortune †, and quite overturned the form of their government ‡. If they left them

Q 4

* Gregory of Tours describes the Goths as cowards. "Ut Gotthorum pavere mos est ——— cum secundum consuetudinem Gotthi terga vertissent." They were of a quite different character when they first settled in the provinces of the empire.

† Procopius relates, that Genseric deprived the principal inhabitants of Africa of their lands and slaves, that the estates of the Vandals were exempt from taxes, and on the contrary, that those of the natives were so loaded with them, that it was with much hardship and labour they could be paid. The Ostrogoths had seized a third of the lands in Italy. In Gaul, the Visigoths had possessed themselves of two thirds of the lands, and the Burgundians one half, with the third part of the slaves.

‡ When the Barbarians settled themselves in the empire, they overturned the form of government established by the emperors. It was too complicated for men, who as yet had almost no ideas of policy. The Abbe du Bos is the only man, who could persuade himself that Clovis, when he made himself master of Gaul, merely supplied the place of the emperor, without making any alteration in the form of government; and that the Gauls preserved their senates, magistrates, and courts of justice; that the cities had a right of making war upon each other; and that they still raised the same taxes.

them the enjoyment of their civil laws, it was either through ignorance, or contempt of these laws. Besides, they established a shocking difference between the conquerors and conquered *. To this piece of policy it was owing, that the conquerors found themselves in an enemy's country, even in the heart of their own dominions; for their subjects naturally became the allies and friends of every power, which would assist in cutting off their tyrannical masters. This was the principal cause of the sudden downfall of so many of the monarchies established by the barbarians, which subsisted only a few years. It was by means hereof that Belisarius, with a handful of soldiers, could free Africa from the Vandals; for the Africans, instead of opposing,

taxes as under the emperors. But there is no occasion to detain the reader with a refutation of this author.

* By the laws of the Visigoths, they were restrained from contracting alliances of marriage with the Romans. We may here recollect how the French treated the people of Gaul. " Si quis ingenuus Francum aut hominem barbarum occiderit, qui lege falica vivit, fol. 200. culpabilis judicetur. Si Romanus homo possessor, id est, qui res in pago ubi commanet proprias possidet, occisus fuerit, is qui eum occidisse convinctur, fol. 100. culpabilis judicetur. Leg. Sal. Tit. 43. Si Romanus Francum ligaverit sine causa, fol. 30. culpabilis judicetur. Si autem Francus Romanum ligaverit sine causa, fol. 15. culpabilis judicetur. Leg. Sal. Tit. 34. Si quis Ripuarius advenam Francum interfecerit, fol. 200. culpabilis judicetur. Si advenam Burgundionem, 160 fol. advenam Romanum, 100 fol. advenam Alamannum, seu Fresionem, vel Bajuvarium, aut Saxonem, 160 fol. culpabilis judicetur. Leg. Rip. Tit. 36."

sing, gave him all the assistance in their power. They carried provisions into his camp, and looked upon him as a deliverer, who would soon free them from the yoke under which they groaned.

Both this general and Narses, who succeeded him in the government of Italy, gained such advantages, as to ruin the empire of the Goths in that country, with forces still less considerable. It never entered the thoughts of these barbarians, that the preservation of Italy depended upon its furnishing them with provisions, and consequently, that agriculture ought by all means to be encouraged. Though they were obliged to fetch their grain, and other necessaries of life from abroad, they never imagined, that they would be undone, and at the mercy of the first power possessed of shipping sufficient to intercept their convoys. Belisarius began his expedition against Italy, by the conquest of Sicily, as being its granary. His ships cruised on the coasts of Italy, and by intercepting the provisions designed to supply the Goths, obliged them to abandon the maritime places in their possession; by which means he dispossessed them of part of Italy, even before his entering it. By improving the terror with which he had inspired the Goths, he soon reduced them to beg for peace; whereby they obliged themselves to pay the emperor a yearly tribute of a hundred pounds of gold, and to assist him with their forces, as often as he had occasion for them. Some even pretend, that king Theodatus agreed to renounce his crown, and lead a private life.

Nothing is more contemptible than the picture which the eastern empire now began to exhibit. In it we behold a nation, by turns, cruel, avaricious, superstitious, pusillanimous, passionate, and voluptuous; in short, the slave of every vice with which arbitrary power

Power is capable of inspiring men, who had always been the friends of lying, imposture, and novelty. Constantinople is never without factions, and has no settled rule or principle of action. The throne lies open to every usurper, and is almost continually the reward of some assassination. Revolutions succeed one another without intermission, and without having any other cause, except that restless temper, which is always weary of the present situation of affairs, and no less certain to regret their change.

The antient taste of the Greeks for philosophy had degenerated, in the declension of their empire, into a ridiculous fondness for playing the sophists. They communicated this spirit to the Christian theology, by broaching all the errors into which it is possible for the human mind to fall, when it lanches out beyond the bounds prescribed it by nature, and attempts to sound the immense depths of the wisdom of God. The Greeks therefore, may very well be considered as a nation of divines. But as religion made faith no less indispensable than good works to salvation, each sect thought they could not be too warm in their controversies, nor employ too much address to promote the truth, whereof they flattered themselves to be alone possessed. This zeal degenerated into uproars, mutinies, and seditions. Strange blindness of mankind! Each sect was guilty of such violences and unjust proceedings to bring over its enemies to its communion, as had just the contrary effect, by making its tenets be abhorred. They made men wretched in this world, in order to convert, and save them from damnation in the next; and all this while, those who exercised such a monstrous charity, never perceived that they damned themselves,

selves, by violating the fundamental laws of the gospel and humanity.

As theological questions were now become affairs of state, by reason of the disorders occasioned by them, they soon engrossed the whole attention of the government. How the enemies of the empire might be repelled, is no longer the subject of debate; but what answer to give to an argument. Instead of making preparations for war, they employed their time in drawing up formulas of faith. All is in the utmost confusion; for as the emperors would needs make themselves judges in matters of faith, and took upon them to pronounce anathemas, excommunicate, and regulate the discipline of the church; the ecclesiastics, on their part, dabbled in politics; and when they were denied an audience, they promoted revolutions, after the example of the armies, senate, and people, who by turns created emperors. Each party successively raises a prince of its own communion to the imperial dignity, and made use of his power to crush its enemies; who no sooner came into favour again, than they with equal fervour shewed their zeal for the glory of God, or what is the same thing, their vengeance.

Whilst the Greeks are a prey to these disorders, there arose a new enemy against them, no less formidable than the nations that had destroyed the western empire. Mahomet, in the beginning of the seventh century, had established a new religion among the Arabs*.

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* Mahomet died in 632, Heraclius being then emperor of Constantinople. Abubeker, Mahomet's father-in-law, succeeded him; whose reign lasted only two years. The next caliph was Omar, whose courage and capacity raised the reputation of the Arabs.

He bore the character both of apostle and conqueror, persuaded and subdued at the same time. By thus uniting the functions of prince and pontiff, he set an example to the caliphs, his successors, to extend his religion and empire by the same means which had given them birth. This was not all, he promised eternal rewards to those who should lose their lives in fighting against infidels, and threatened with hell torments, those who continued idle at home, unless by paying contributions they contributed to the charges and success of the war. Besides that the Arabians, or Sarrafins *, were naturally brave, and able to support the hardships of a military life, their religion and political government had likewise a tendency to make them a nation of soldiers. They rushed with the greater courage to meet dangers, both as they believed they should be the martyrs of their religion, and because the caliphs had persuaded them that all things were governed by a blind fatality, so that human prudence could not alter events which were determined from eternity.

The conquests of the Sarrafins make one of the most extraordinary revolutions recorded in history; for after having made themselves masters of Egypt and Palestine, and subdued Africa, they over-run Asia, possessed themselves of provinces of the empire, still more important than those already mentioned, and quite overthrew the monarchy of the Persians. Nothing seemed able to resist them. Even Europe was not safe: all the world knows, how the Sarrafins established their empire in Spain, upon the ruins of that of the Visigoths, and even penetrated into the heart of France; and how they conquered Sicily, and made them-

* The Arabians are called Sarrafins from Saraca, or Saracene, a country of Arabia Felix.

themselves dreaded on the Mediterranean. The rapidity and uninterrupted of these victories would be a miracle, which the Mahometan divines might alledge as a proof of Mahomet's mission, if the weakness of the empire of Constantinople, and of the greater part of the monarchies erected by the barbarians, had not made every thing easy to so brave and daring a people as the Sarrafins.

Under the reigns of Constantine Progonatus and Leo of Issauria, they had even the boldness to attack the capital itself of the empire. What saved it in such unfavourable circumstances, was the Greek fire, invented by the celebrated Callinices. As this fire burnt in the water itself, the Greeks made use of it to burn their enemies ships. It is hard to say, whether the consternation or surprize of the Arabians was greatest; so that not daring to put any more to sea, they contented themselves with making war in the remote provinces of the empire. Victory constantly attended them, while they kept united; whereas by increasing the number of their caliphs, their reputation was greatly impaired: their government too being military, the caliphs became contemptible, when they ceased to appear at the head of their armies, and command them in person. The sultans, their lieutenants, left them only the title and functions of the chief pontiff of their religion; and the domestic divisions of these new sovereigns, proved the security of their neighbours.

The empire began to take breath, when a new power started up in Asia, whose very first success must have made the emperors tremble. This was the Turks, a people originally of the same country with the Huns, who, after having served the Greeks on different occasions, had settled themselves in the eastern frontiers
of

of the empire. Towards the end of the sixth century they rebelled against Mahomet, sultan of Persia, who had treated them with cruelty. When this people had once made proof of their strength, they spread themselves all over Asia, at first with no other design than to plunder. Under the reign of Constantine Monomachus, the Turks made incursions as far as the Bosphorus. The weakness of the emperors inspired them with new courage; so that after having procured a solid settlement, all their thoughts were employed how they should aggrandise themselves.

If the emperors had known how to adapt their policy to the deplorable situation of their affairs; if they could have dispensed with that pride, which the successors of Constantine indulged in quality of heirs to the greatness of the Romans; in short, could they have renounced all thoughts of universal monarchy, when the only question was to save themselves from being undone by the infidels; they possibly might have turned to their advantage, that indiscreet zeal which armed all the western nations, in order to deliver the holy land. These princes, on the contrary, acted like weak men, to whom the nearest danger always appears the greatest. The infidels alarmed them, it is true; but when they saw such numerous armies of the crusaders approaching Constantinople, they looked upon them as their most formidable enemies. In reality, it should seem, that the western nations, who were already weary of having a settled abode, had resumed the restless and roving disposition of their ancestors. Those engaged in the crusades were silly enough, not only to believe that their expedition was agreeable to God, but to overlook the most obvious obstacles to their design. It never entered their thoughts, how they should get to Palestine, which they were to subdue, as if they had been persuaded,

suaded, that providence would repair their blunders by continual miracles. These military pilgrims, who were always without provisions, and threatened with immediate destruction, found themselves reduced to plunder the provinces through which they marched. Such guests, it must be allowed, were far from being agreeable; but as the emperors were by no means in a condition to keep them out of Greece, mildness and patience was the only course they could take. Instead of imposing upon the people of the west in relation to conquests, which it was probable they would never make, they should have united interests with them*. The emperors, however, could not endure the thoughts of it. The pretended dignity which they affected, was in truth nothing but pride, that made them ridiculous. In the room of force, they had recourse to cunning, address, and chicane; which was precisely the most infallible way to make them contemptible in the eyes of the western nations, whose only virtue was an open frankness, which they no doubt owed to the then prevailing spirit of chivalry.

Our chronicles are full of the treacheries of the emperors in regard to the people engaged in the crusade; who revenged themselves by chasing them from their capital. It was natural for them to imagine, that the indulgencies which awaited them in Palestine, would be vouchsafed them in Greece, if, by making themselves masters of Constantinople, they could there set up the rites of the Latin church; and put an end to a schism, which possibly made the Greeks no less odious than

* The emperors demanded, that those engaged in the crusade, should do them homage for the lands which they intended to conquer from the infidels.

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than the infidels †. The dominion of the Latins in Greece, was of short continuance; but though the emperors recovered their capital, they daily saw their ruin more certain. These ultramarine wars, in regard to which, the people of the west were at last undeceived, served only to inflame the hatred of the infidels against Christians. They were impatient to revenge themselves, and the empire alone must sustain their whole shock.

“ In conformity to our holy faith, said Osman I. sultan
 “ of the Turks, let us first invite the Christian princes
 “ to receive the religion of the prophet of God. If
 “ they reject our invitation, they are to be declared the
 “ enemies of God and of truth, whose infidelity must
 “ be conquered by fire and sword, and they themselves
 “ subjected to our worship, or punished for their stubbornness.”

The Infidels, who continued to make still new progress in Asia, soon extended their dominion as far as the Bosphorus; and the emperors, after begging succours to no purpose in Christendom, were obliged to permit the Turks to build forts in Greece; so that Constantinople, subjected in a manner to its enemies even before they had actually reduced it, fell at last by the arms of Mahomet II.

† There is no question but that religion had a great hand in the attempts of the crusaders upon the empire. Of this we need no other proof, but the letters of Baldwin, earl of Flanders, and emperor elect; the one of which is addressed to all christians, and the other to the pope. In the first, he says, “ manus domini hæc operatur;” but assumes a more emphatic tone in the second. “ Amantissime pater, vocate cœtum, congregate populum, condonate senes & fugentes ubera, sanctificate diem acceptabilem domino, diem stabilis endæ unitatis & pacis.”

F I N I S.



